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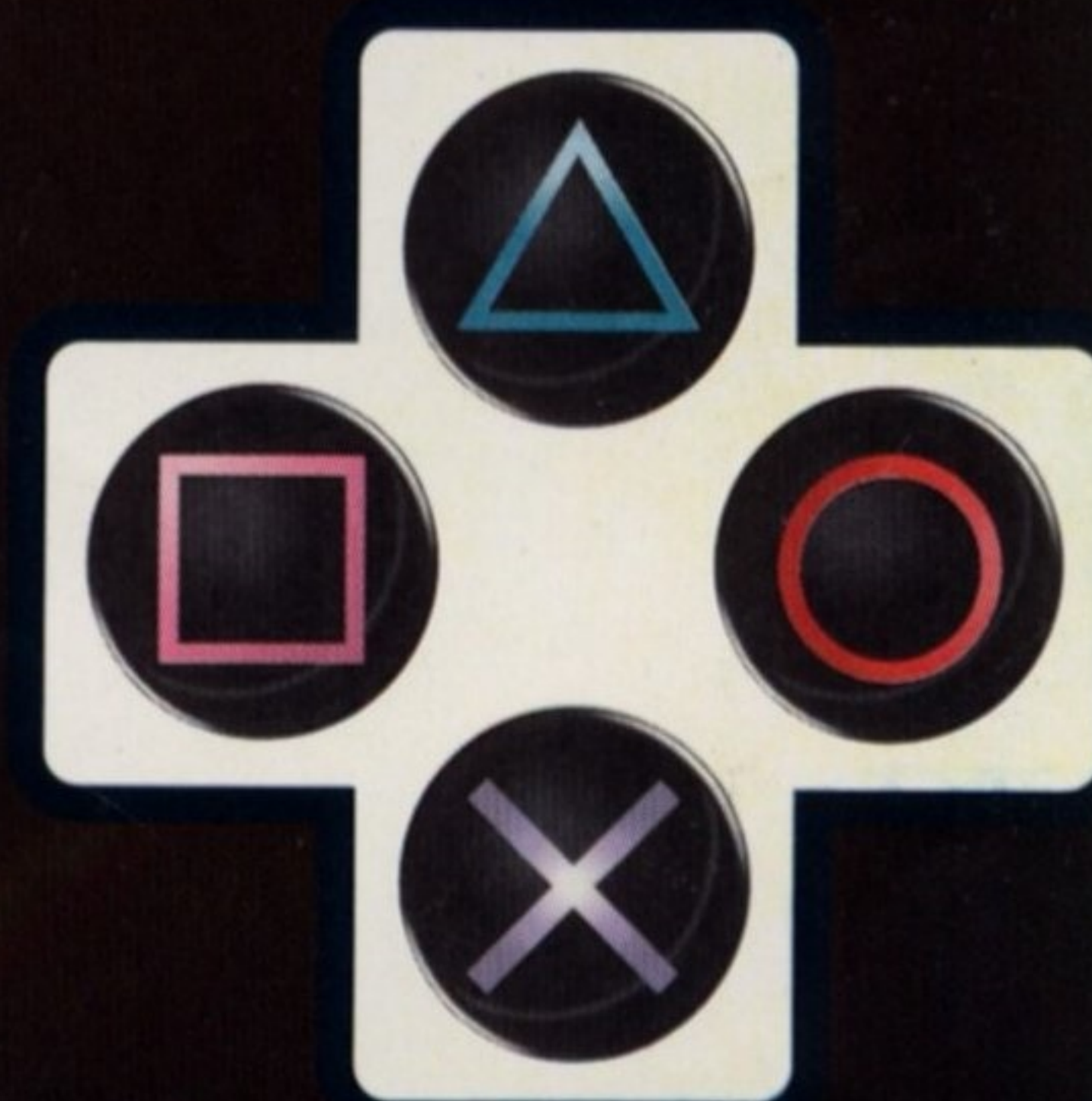
The Most Powerful Games Magazine On Earth!

issue one

nov '95

£2.95

PLAY



the 100% Unofficial **PLAYSTATION** *Magazine*

Meet the **G-Police**

**murder, destruction
– and the law on
your side!**

**29 big
reviews
including:**

Wipeout
Destruction Derby
Ridge Racer
Worms
WWF Wrestlemania
Rayman
Theme Park
Loaded
NBA Jam T.E.
Striker '96
Discworld
Ace Combat
The Raiden Project
3D Lemmings
J-League Winning Eleven

Battle of the beat 'em-ups:

Mortal Kombat 3
Tekken
Battle Arena Toshinden
Zero Divide
Street Fighter: The Movie

Win
A PlayStation
and
Primal Rage!

Plus:

Exclusive first looks at

Syndicate Wars • Fade To Black • Allegiance • Total NBA '96





**PC
CD
ROM**

"PlayStation owners wanting a respite from all that frenetic arcade-like action couldn't pick a better game."

GamePro 90%

"...by completely re-thinking this classic and adding, quite literally, another dimension, Psygnosis have created a game that is as brilliantly original as the first Lemmings game. Buy it."

PC Attack 94 %

"Hugely entertaining game that's all but impossible to put down. Don't even think about missing this."

PC Gamer 94%

"3D Lemmings is the best head-scratcher money can buy. That's a fact."

Ultimate Future Games 90%



Lemmings

BE AN INDIVIDUAL. JOIN THE MASSES



Clockwork Games



Here we go then. You and us. On an endless odyssey into the world of 32bit gaming. The Sony PlayStation has arrived and we love it. Of course we do, we've spent the last month working slavishly to bring you the best mag on the market about it.

Seen the other PlayStation mags yet? Pretty sad huh? Still, we're here now and we're unofficial, wild and not on the payroll, compendé. The only people we answer to are you, the readers, and when you part with your £2.95 you are entering into a deal based on trust. You are trusting us to bring you the most stylish, well-informed, honest and comprehensive PlayStation editorial around, and we are trusting that if we do that you will buy our next issue, and our next and our next. No problem. We're the best!

Now let me introduce you to the team:

Managing Editor: Dave Perry

► That's me! I'm ace I am. The console king! I've previously launched magazines such as *Mega Power*, *Games World* and *X•Gen*, and I've also been a TV regular on *GamesMaster*, *Games World* and *The Net*. I'm the leader - A legend!

Deputy Editor: Ian Lynch

► My right hand man and a real oak in a world of willows. Ian joined us from *CTW* (the games industry's trade paper) and has his finger firmly on the proverbial pulse. He's also written for *PC Home*, *GB Action*, *Super Action*, *Mega Action*, *PC Action* and *Amiga Action*. In fact, he's a real action man.

Games Editor: Asam Ahmad

► Likes to be called Caveman or KV, wonderful what a sociology degree can do for you eh? Asam is a real ladies man and a ferocious games player to boot. Our shaven-headed Games Ed previously worked on *Amiga Format* and *Amiga Power*.

Staff Writer: Ryan Butt

► Is there a magazine this man hasn't worked on? *Console XS*, *Super Pro*, *Super Gamer*, *Sega Pro*, *Games World*, *3DO Magazine* and *PC Kids*. There isn't a format he hasn't played but he's gone for the PlayStation. Well that's the introductions over with, so let's *Play!*

Dave Perry
Managing Editor

PlayStation Wired

06 The most informative PlayStation news section in the UK.

PlayStation Wire is your link to the future of Sony's super console and our way of showing off just how big our brains are.

Workstation

Some mags call them previews, some use the very industrial 'work in progress' tag. In *Play* they are WorkStations, your chance to see tomorrow's biggest games today. Not just a piddly page written from a publisher handout but massive three/four page interviews with the guys designing the games!

This issue our WorkStations include:

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INSIDE PLAY

the 100% Unofficial

It's Competition Time!

40 Win a Sony PlayStation complete with a copy of *Primal Rage*, an extra joypad and loads of limited edition goodies for runners up. Get down to some serious flesh tearing action.



Another Fan-riffic Competition!

84 *Discworld*. The rather smart Terry Pratchett inspired-adventure game.

We've loads of fantastic goodies to give away! Say thank-you.



Definition of Sound

80 In-game soundtracks are finally moving away from the limited heavy rock riffs of old. In fact, with the introduction of Q



Sound, many audio tracks have now become very cool indeed and are on their way to becoming club classics. We lend an ear to the unsung heroes of the games world – the muso types.

PLAY



PLAYSTATION Magazine

Station Master

83 "Please Station Master, I'm stuck on..." Heh, heh. Sorry, couldn't resist it. No sad old blokes with monacles here, just hardcore gameplaying advice from our experienced team of console busters. Make your life a little easier and get stuck in to our in-depth guides to:

Wipeout

86

Mortal Kombat 3

88



Evaluation Station

So can they hack it? This is the section where we make the marketing men leap for joy or sob like naughty, spanked children. Yep, we pride ourselves on having a brutally honest review crew and in this massive games section we let you know exactly what the latest releases are worth. Among those targeted for evaluation this issue:

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PlayBack

93 An at-a-glance reference point to PlayStation gaming. Every title ever released appears here along with it's relevant Play score.

Subscriptions

94 Don't be silly! Don't just hope that you'll get to your newsagents every month before your copy of Play has been sold to someone else.

Survey

95 Help us out will you? Look, we think we know who you are. We think we know what you want. But maybe we've got it all wrong!

Played Out

98 Next month we'll have...sorry, but that's what the Played Out page is for, amongst other things.

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PLAYSTAT

Wired

Sony arrives

Dateline: Friday, September 29th,
Saturday, September 30th.

**The PlayStation
launch weekend.**

Sony has got off to a flyer in the battle to win the hearts and cash of video game enthusiasts. The PlayStation launch weekend of the Friday September 29th and Saturday 30th has been hailed as a fantastic success by a relieved and jubilant videogames industry. With all eyes on the PlayStation to see whether it could outstrip the first few days of Saturn sales, Sony's new pride and joy delivered, selling an estimated 20,000 machines in three days. This is four times the 5,000 achieved by the over-priced Sega Saturn.

This early success is vital for Sony, as the two rivals are locked in battles to persuade third party developers to give their machines priority, ensuring that great games come out on their platform first. Having a fantastic machine is useless if there aren't enough games to play, or if they aren't good enough, just ask anybody you know that owns a 3Do or a Jaguar.

Needless to say, Sony are very happy.

"It was a great weekend," Doug Goodwin, head of UK Sales at Sony Computer Entertainment, told *Play*.

"We were optimistic that it would go well, but we never expected to sell so



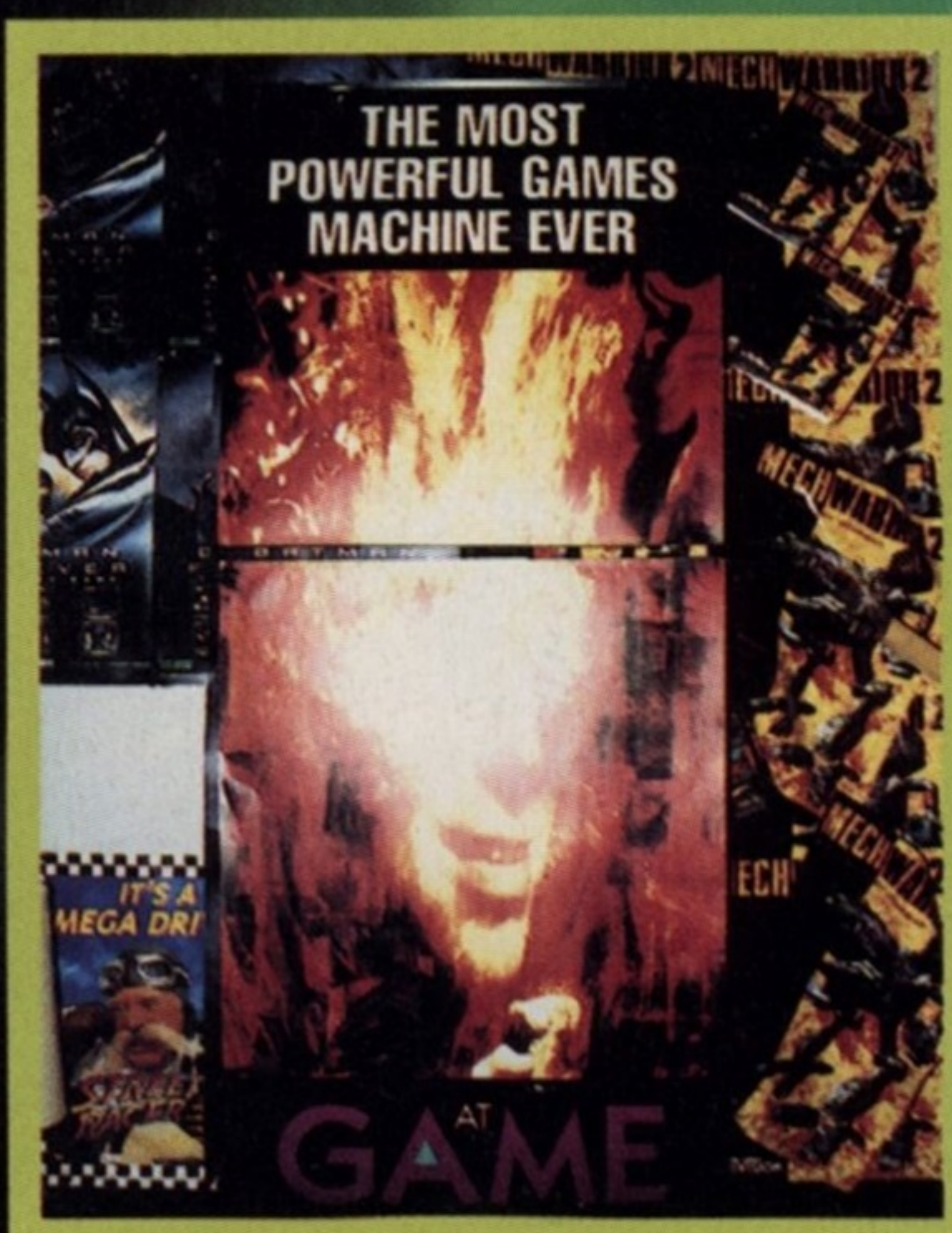
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yes with a bang...

many PlayStations so quickly. The number of people that bought PlayStations during the first Friday and Saturday on sale was unbelievable.

"We don't feel we've won the war, it's not about the first 10,000 you sell, it's about the last three million. But it is great to get off to such a good start, and I'd like to thank everybody, especially the retailers, that worked so

▼ **PlayStation: Powerful or what? Putting other formats in the shade.**



▲ **HMV:** This one probably didn't but over 15 stores sold out of PlayStations within two days.

hard to make the PlayStation a success."

Talking of shops, if you looked around there were a few bargains to be had. Some Comet outlets were selling the machine at £289 with Toys R Us going one, or two actually, better, offering the PlayStation plus *Street Fighter: The Movie* for £287. HMV had it in the window for £299, but tempted customers with £60 worth of free software vouchers, £10 more than the Game chain, who also gave Sony's finest a £299 price tag. Top offer goes to Future Zone, though, who offered Saturn owners the chance to trade in their Sega unit and games in a part-exchange deal (you get £200 off for the Saturn, £20 for each game). Which, if you gave them a Saturn and say, four games, meant you could have walked off with a PlayStation for just under £20.

Who knows, the offers might still going by the time you read this. Check it out if you haven't already bought a machine and were thinking of doing so.

This year's been a tough one for videogames shops (aah!), so not surprisingly, they were all enthusiastic about the success of the PlayStation launch, and there were some rather interesting stories to tell.

...as Sega runs scared

So, with all the success Sony's had, what has Sega been doing to shore up support for the Saturn? After some heavy research spent chasing down informants and generally running up an enormous phone bill, *Play* was staggered to find out that Sega seems already to be drawing up plans to team up with another Japanese corporation to produce yet another new machine.

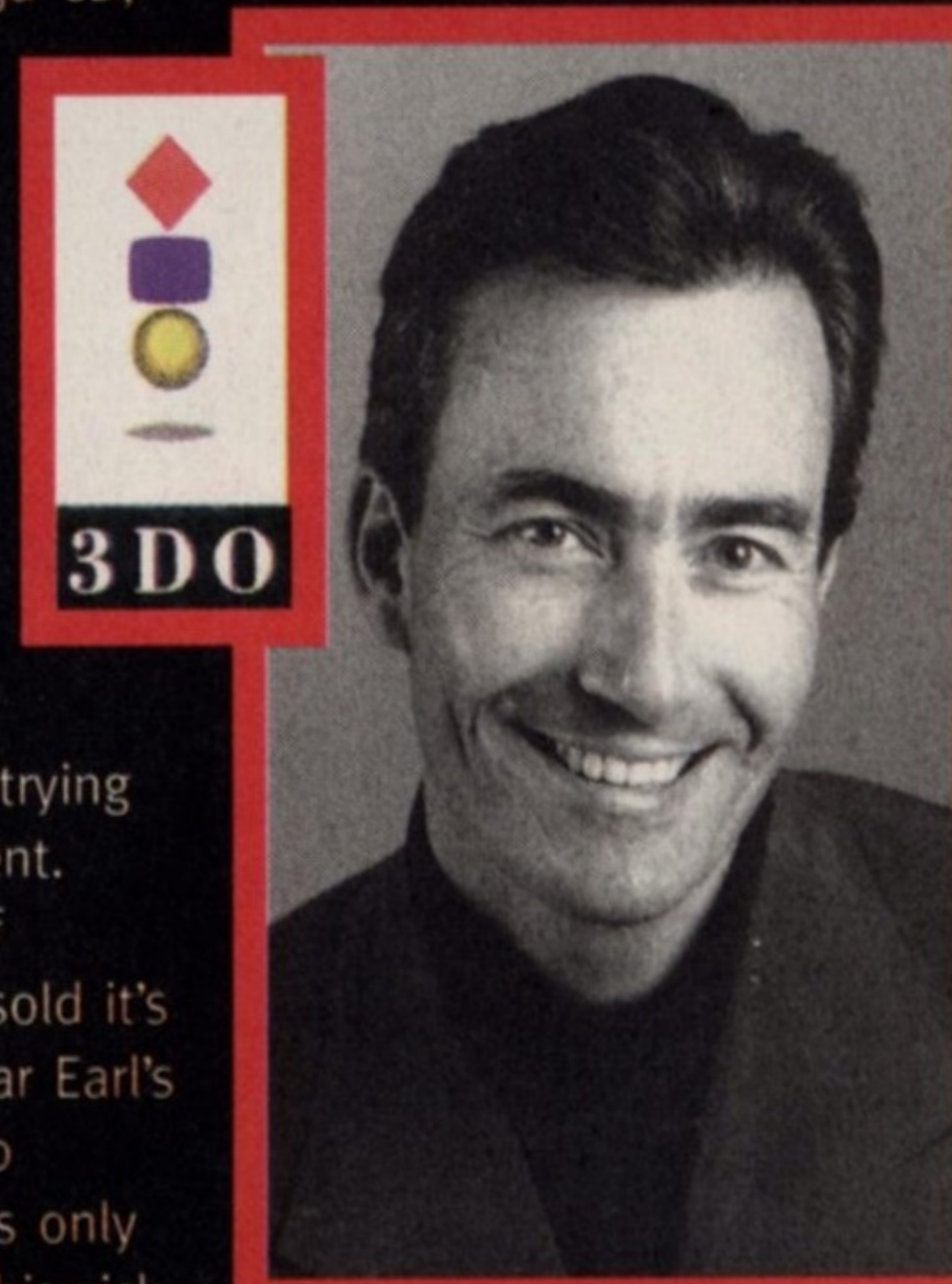
Industry sources say that top Sega chiefs have been in talks with the president of the 3DO company, Trip Hawkins about Sega acquiring the rights to 3DO's M2 technology. (M2 is 3DO's pricey 64bit catch-up-with-and-overtake-the-PlayStation-and-Saturn add-on to the 3DO player).

One US newspaper has even reported that Sega was planning to buy 3DO. That seems unlikely, but what could happen is that a Japanese firm, possibly Matsushita, might pay Sega for the use of its name, creating a Sega-branded M2 unit, which could make it over to the UK as early as next year. This wouldn't be the first time Sega has done such a deal. The games giant already operates a similar agreement with a US outfit called Tiger Electronics, who manufactures and sells electronic toys under the Sega name.

Some will say that if this goes ahead, it means that Sega is all but ready to throw in the towel in the fight against the PlayStation. *Play* couldn't possibly comment on this.

Consider this, a new Sega-branded M2 unit would actually be its fourth launch since the Mega Drive. Since those glory days, the firm has launched the Mega CD, 32X and now Saturn, without ever providing enough software support of its own, or convincing the games development community to back them properly. Although, to be fair, the jury is still out, deciding the verdict on the Saturn hardware.

Sega also seems to be trying to raise cash at the moment. After a tough two years of trading, the firm has just sold its impressive London HQ near Earl's Court for an estimated £10 million, moving into offices only two-thirds of the size in Chiswick. It doesn't look good for old Sonic and his pals, does it?



▲ **Hawkins:** Is he going to sell 3DO out to Sega?



▲ Peripherals: Flying out the door with hardware and software.



"It was fantastic, couldn't have been better," Gerry Berkley, computer games buyer at HMV, enthused to *Play*.

"We sold out of everything by the Monday. I can't remember a launch like it since the Mega Drive. It's been absolutely amazing, with most people buying two or three games and a controller. *Wipeout* was our best selling game, followed by *Ridge Racer* and *Battle Arena Toshinden*. *Wipeout* was brilliant, our Manchester store had sold out by the Friday. We'd actually sold all our PlayStations in 15 of our shops by the end of the weekend."

Paul Lloyd-Roach, the operations director of Game Ltd, was equally happy.

"It went phenomenally well, it exceeded all our expectations. Actually we've sold double the machines we thought we might. "We had quite a lot of machines in, more than most of our competitors in fact, but some of our outlets still sold out on the first Friday. By the end of the week we had very few left across the country. I think we might even have been able to sell double

the number we did in the first week if we'd had more stock.

"We actually had a phenomenally good day with the Saturn, but this has been even better. We've sold four times the number of PlayStations as we did Saturns in the same period. It's been better than any launch I can remember, even better than the Mega Drive."

The smaller, independent shops have been jumping up and down too. They were helped by Sony's recognition that, as the experts, and, in some cases, the only store in smaller towns, they were vital to selling the PlayStation. Sony went so far as to set up an independents-dedicated division to make sure as many people as possible in the country were able to get access to a shop selling the PlayStation. Will Copeland, managing director of established

Norwich outfit One Step Beyond and a committee member of NASCR, the independents shop body, was delighted.

"I'm ecstatic. God bless Sony. We ordered 100 machines and we'd sold practically all of them by the end of the first Saturday, which compares to 19 Saturns in the same period, and that was miles better than most shops around here.

"We stock all types of computer stuff and the PlayStation weekend was actually even better for us than the *Windows '95* launch."

Hey guys, *Play* thinks we might have backed a winner here!

Bloody cheek!

Sony should be congratulated on a fantastic launch. But, much as we're all PlayStation fans here, we're fiercely independent, and when we disagree with them, we're going to tell you.

Sony Computer Entertainment Europe has set up an official helpline to deal with queries on hints and tips, news, technical details and information on new releases amongst other things. That's the good news. But get this, the number for this new service is 0881 505 505 which means that the calls cost 39p per minute during peak hours and 25p at other times to this 'lower tariff' premium rate line.

However, in order to satisfy a governing body directive on premium-rate lines, Sony has stated that calls to the PowerLine will cost no more than £1.95 a time. Oh, that's alright then. Nevertheless, at nearly £2(!) a throw, a few calls to the service will result in a lot of upset bill-payers, and a lot of ill-feeling all round. *Play* feels that the decision to make the PowerLine a premium rate number should have been thought out a little more to say the least. Outrageous.



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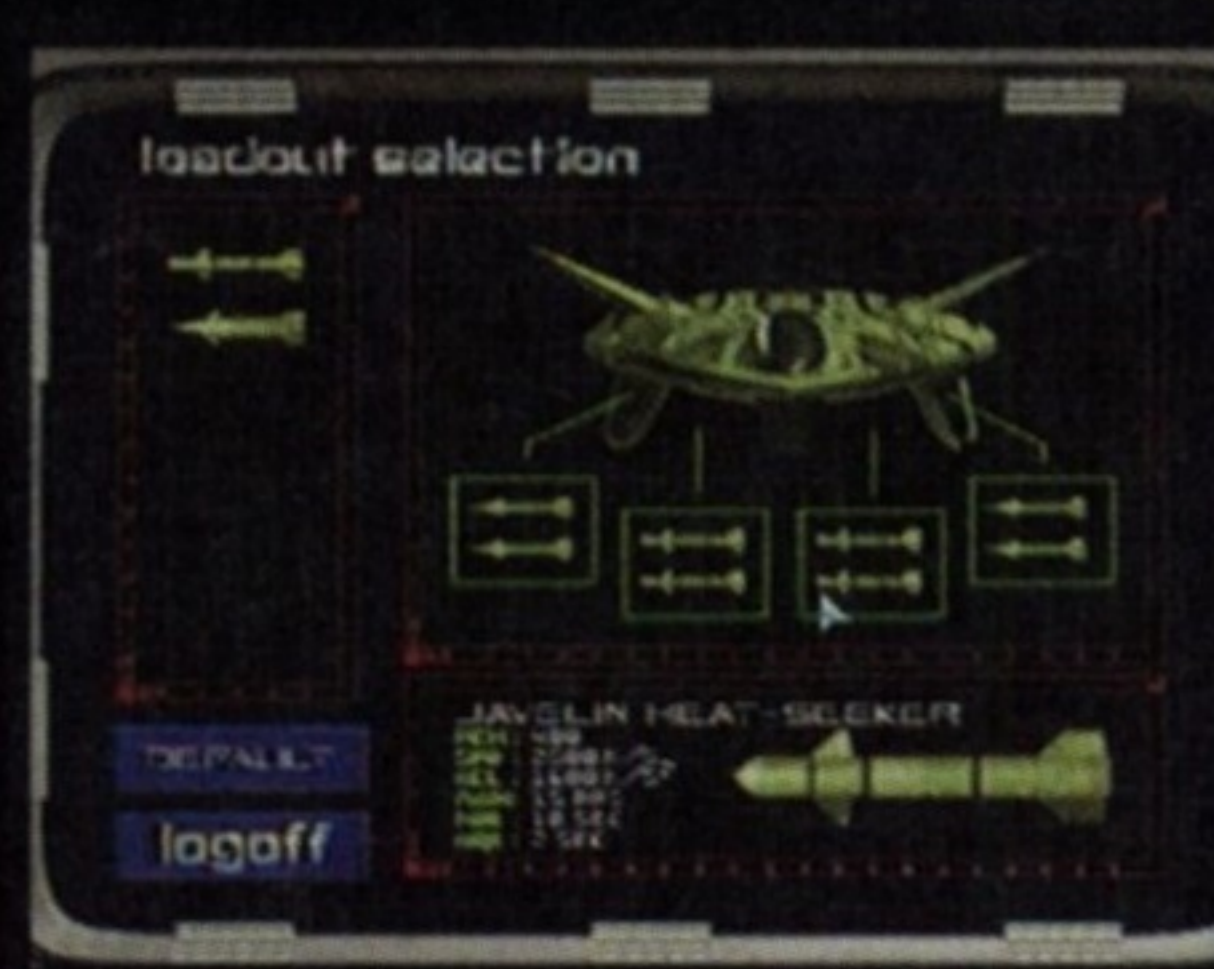
PlayStation MKII

Don't worry, it's not a new PlayStation machine, we're talking *Mortal*

Kombat II, the infamous beat 'em-up and do horrible things to 'em, fighting game. It's now nearing release for the PlayStation. Now we know *MK3* is already out, or should be by the time you read this, but bear with us for a minute. The PlayStation version promises to be the most faithful to the

arcade, with all 14 characters (plus new ones including Kitana and Reptile), all the arcade voice samples and even has enhanced graphics and extra bits of animation.

And, of course, all the favourite moves will be included, 'babalities' and 'friendships' etc., and we're promised that it'll also include some hidden characters and other treats. The release for *Mortal Kombat II* is set for Nov. Look out for a review next ish.



Wing Commander III: Heart of the Tiger

Origin are releasing the awesome *Wing Commander III* for the PlayStation. As ever, the PlayStation version should be the best ever, with over three hours of live-action video, and a full Dolby Surround-Sound soundtrack to provide gamers with the most immersive version yet possible.

The game follows a *Star Wars* style story line, where saving the Earth from impending takeover by the Kilrathi. You play the part of Col. Christopher Blair (played by Mark Hamill of *Star Wars* fame) as eagle-eyed pilot whose job it is to avenge the alien onslaught. Those of you who will have seen the PC versions of this game will know that *Wing Commander III: Heart of the Tiger* is bound to be something special. The release should be imminent, so with any luck, and *Play* will have a full review in the December issue.

Agile Virgins a go go

Cruising overhead, looping the loop, and screeching to a climatic halt on the tarmac in November comes Virgin's high powered flight sim, *Agile Warrior*.

Flying out to rival the likes of *Ace Combat* (reviewed on page 62), *Agile Warrior* has been touted as a 3D *Desert Strike*, so does that mean we get to blast Saddam again?

Undoubtedly the focus of the game is not on techy dials and flight manoeuvres, but gung-ho merry Mig blasting japes courtesy of your hefty arsenal of firepower. To add insult to injury you can even tune into the unfortunate sods that bite the dust via the handy missile-cam that follows the action right up until the point of impact. In yer face sucker!

There are many missions to attempt spanning over desert, jungle, and water terrain – so remember to pack your wellies in case you take a dive. Ok so playing this may not win you any war medals, or pull any leggy flight teachers, but theoretically it's a step in the right direction.

Record giant comes out to play

BMG, one of the biggest record and CD firms in the world, has turned its hand to games. The firm has spent the past year or so talking to game-designers, waving chequebooks at people and generally promising them a lifestyle that's more rock 'n' roll than computer programmer.

Now, their first batch of games (apart from the odd 3DO release) with an impressive-sounding line-up of PlayStation titles scheduled

for the next six months.

Off-World Interceptor is an original off-road 4x4 vehicle combat game that turns players into fearless off-road warriors. *Total Eclipse* is a space combat simulator. *The Horde* is an action-strategy game set in a mediaeval fantasy world where you must save your village from attack from a vile, bumbling horde of creatures. *Gex* is a platform game with a difference. You take the role of the eponymous gecko and must navigate yourself through various levels to escape the rather evil and

nasty media dimension.

Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain is a fantasy role-playing game involving vampires and sucking blood from victims, with a bit of beat 'em-up to boot. *3D Baseball '95* is part of Crystal Dynamics new Championship Sports label. The game features some hyper-realistic 3D action with real motion captured players. *3D Basketball* is another in the Championship Sports label, based on the 3DO hit *Slam 'n' Jam '95*. It's a five-on-five basketball game and is likely to feature a major basketball licence,

possibly a 'magical' one... *Blazing Dragons* is a graphical adventure game based on the legend of King Arthur. Created by Terry Jones this game should be a rather amusing affair. The release dates haven't been set yet, but *Play* will keep you up to date with the latest.

The immense support for the PlayStation, from BMG i.e. and other companies, is good news. We can look forward to the PlayStation being the best ever console as far as games, hardware and support is concerned. If you haven't got one, buy one now!

Bullfrog gets high on PlayStation

Bullfrog's superb speed game *Hi-Octane* is scheduled to arrive on the PlayStation next month. It combines elements of racing and combat in a futuristic vision of joy-riding in the 21st century. You take control of an armour clad vehicle in a drive across varying terrain. Finding the shortest route to your destination and destroying your assailants in the process is the only way to survive in this game. Death is an integral part of the play here – it's kill or be killed. There's no time for mercy.

Hi-Octane's feature list includes 3D sound, four different views and can be played as a race or combat game. The good news for PlayStation owners is that the conversion will be better than the original PC version, running quicker than on a top of the range Pentium. New features include a two player split-screen mode, an eight player option, and new tracks, *Hi-Octane* should be a cracker. We will, of course, have a full review next issue.



Ministerial Adoption of PlayStation

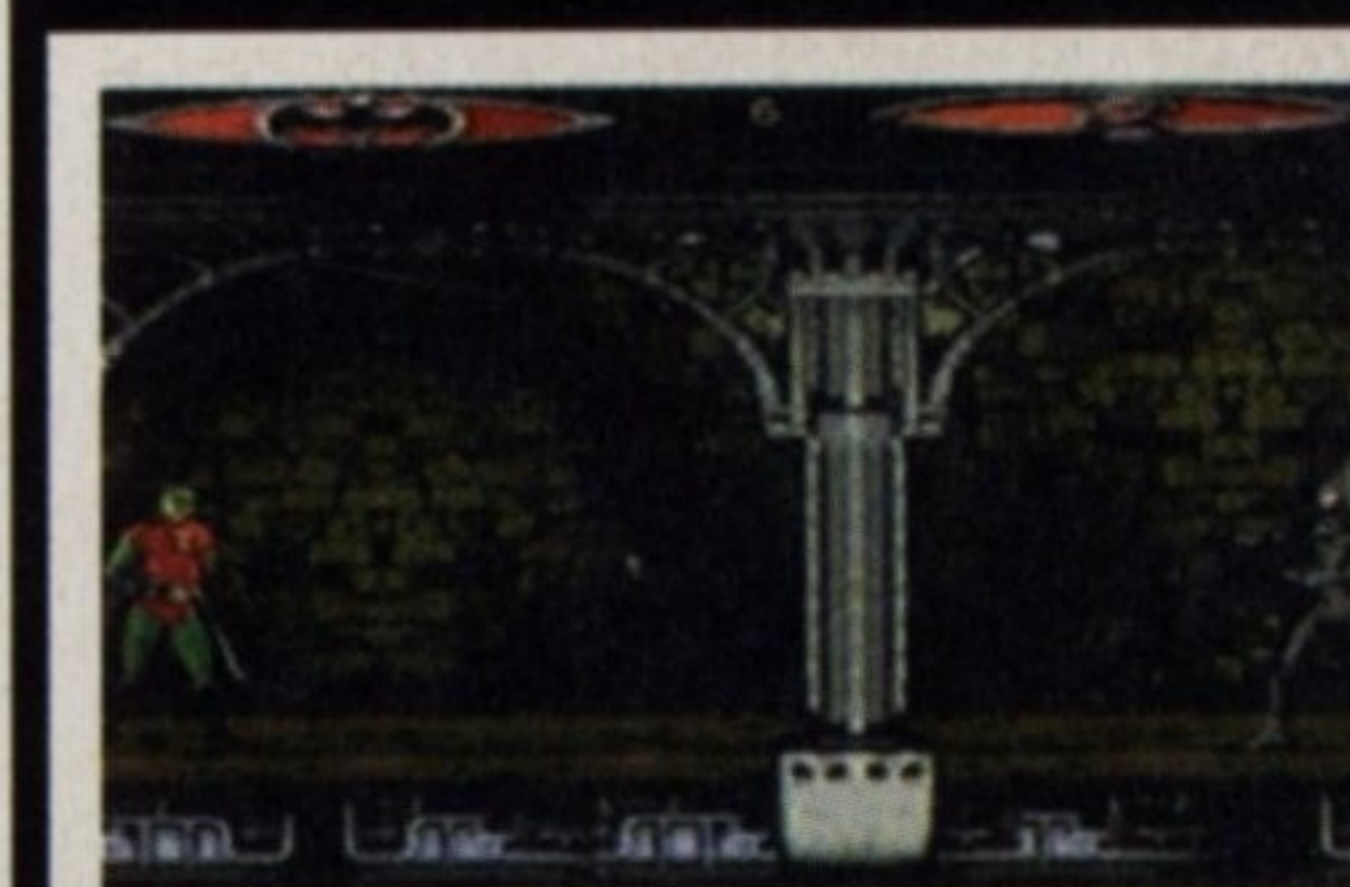
That mother of clubs, Ministry of Sound has adopted a suite of PlayStations. The machines will be part of the new-look Ministry of Sound club featuring a dedicated games arena for clubbers. This area will allow happy clubbers to partake in a little frenzied-game-mayhem interspersed with bouts of grooving. This means that if you haven't pulled, at least you can still get to handle some sexy hardware.

Batman takes forever

Dodgy old 16bit versions of hot movie licence *Batman Forever* may now be in the shops, but, horrors, bat-fans, the PlayStation version of Acclaim's *Batman Forever*, has been delayed, won't be ready until next summer and may not even be released at all. Write to Acclaim now, demanding they give us our man in tights.

In the meantime, an arcade version definitely is on its way, probably just after Christmas, and should everything work out, the PlayStation version will use much the same code.

The game has been developed alongside the filming of the movie and boasts motion-captured footage and scenery from the film for added realism. *Batman Forever* will also feature a two player co-operative mode which will allow gamers to control both Batman and, his pal Robin. Cool.



Wakefield 1 Japan 0

Witchwood is the forthcoming style-adventure/role-playing game from Team 17. You take the control of Pip and you must rescue the land of Witchwood from under the shadowy spell of an evil witch. To do this, you must traverse the land and talk to over 60 other characters. You even have to get into various animals' minds just to see what they've seen!

Witchwood also features an innovative Global Knowledge System which cuts out pointless conversations by analysing your actions, character interaction, and alters how people react to you.

It's also remarkable for the fact that one of the settings, the village, is based on ancient historical maps of mediaeval Wakefield, Team 17's very own home town!

Witchwood should arrive by Easter '96.



▲ *Witchwood*: Set in medieval Wakefield. Are the skeletons the members of Team 17?

FIFA '96 here next month!

Electronic Arts' Sports Division have release details of their forthcoming line-up for the PlayStation. *FIFA Soccer '96*, is the latest version of the number one selling footy game from the 16bit platforms. We've had a good look at a nearly finished copy and it looks superb, although there did seem to be one or two things which needed ironing out. It's in full 3D, with multiple viewpoints, and a full, actually quite good, commentary by John Motson. Claimed to be the most realistic soccer game to date, *FIFA* will be reviewed next issue.

If football wasn't enough, EA are also bringing out *Madden NFL '96* for the PlayStation. This is the latest incarnation of the immensely popular *John Madden Football* that EA launched a few years ago. The game is to utilise EA's 3D Virtual Stadium technology and features all 30 NFL teams, and rendered fly-bys of each of the 30 Stadiums. *Madden NFL '96* should be available in late December.

The other games that EA Sports have on the horizon are *NHL '96*, or hockey to you and me, *PGA Tour '96*, the classic golf game, and *NBA Live '96*, a basketball game. Electronic Arts have produced some of the best sports games on other platforms and given the PlayStation's superior hardware over other platforms, we might just see something special in a month or two.



Sony signs sports stars

Sony have tied up a sponsorship deal with two style-leading sports stars. Boxing supremo Prince Naseem Hamed and world superbike champion Carl Fogarty have both been signed-up to help promote the PlayStation further in Sony's multi-million pound promotional campaign.

Prince Naseem Hamed will be temporarily abandoning his leopard-skin shorts in favour of a new PlayStation number featuring various logos. The sponsorship deal comprises of a package worth over £100,000 reportedly. Prince Naseem will be donning his new attire for four fights, after which even more promotions will follow.

Carl Fogarty, dubbed the 'Barry Sheen of the 90s', is the second personality to have recently been signed to promote the PlayStation. Fogarty has had two wins in the British round of the World Superbike Championship at Brands Hatch and will be sporting the fastest PlayStation logo you'll ever see, probably.

A kind of magic

Magic Carpet breaks on to the PlayStation early next year. The game is being converted from the superb PC game. The PlayStation version is going to be enhanced from the original, with improved graphics and speed. Bullfrog are currently working on converting many



of their successful titles to the PlayStation and are fully supporting the machine due to its superior power. (It's great working on a PlayStation magazine.)

Play is planning to follow the game closely throughout development.

Jack pops up

DInfrogrames is working on the PlayStation version of their classic adventure game *Alone in the Dark: Jack is Back*. You take the role of Edward Carnby in his search to find his pal Ted Striker. Striker, who was investigating the kidnapping of an eight year old girl, Grace Saunders, by One Eyed Jack, has

been missing for a week. Your mission is to find Striker and the girl and rescue them from the clutches of the rather notorious bootlegger Jack.

The graphics on the PlayStation version are touted as far improved on the PC version and it has extra sound and is generally a far more polished game. *Alone in the Dark: Jack is Back* will be reviewed next issue.



Acclaim alienates everyone



Acclaim is developing *Alien Trilogy* for the PlayStation. Making use of Acclaim's award-winning motion capture technology for realistic action, *Alien Trilogy* is to feature 18 levels of intense xenophobic action. The game combines elements from *Alien*, *Aliens* and *Alien³* and should be the most comprehensive Alien bashing game on earth. For sheer firepower, the game boasts an extensive array of special weapons and some incredibly fearsome, er, aliens, including face-huggers, dog-aliens and queens. *Alien Trilogy* is planned for release in January, so *Play*ll be reviewing it in time for Christmas.

Heretics Doomed Alert

Claimed to be the most immersive, real-world, combat-action computer game yet produced, *Hexen - Beyond Heretic* by id Software and Raven, is coming to the PlayStation. The game has an advanced scripting engine that allows multiple actions to be triggered by the players actions and is claimed to take the *Doom* engine as far as it can go. *Hexen - Beyond Heretic* is to appear during the first quarter of '96.

MK3 coins it in

Mortal Kombat 3 out any day now on the PlayStation from Sony, is in the process of being upgraded in the arcades. Original designer Williams is updating the cabinet with several of the characters in *MKII*, including Kitana and Scorpion. As well as the new characters, the upgrade will feature an extended set of special moves. Williams main reason for upgrading *MK3* is to give it a new lease of life, as the PlayStation version is virtually identical to the arcade.

But coin-op fans won't be stealing a march on home-based gamers for that long. From what we hear on the grapevine, it seems a special memory card patch will be made available to allow PlayStation owners to keep right up to date with the arcades. Smart.

▼ *MK3*: More new special moves to keep you happy.



▼ Gory as ever, *MK3* will be out very soon...



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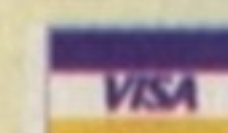
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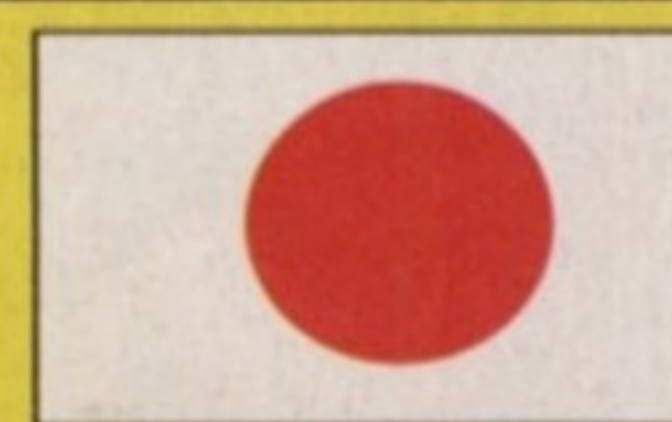
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Wild Tekken 2 Rumours

We know every games journo seems to be raving on about *Tekken 2* at the moment. (If you don't know why, read our *Tekken* review starting on page 50 – it's one hell of a game) Well, fed up of listening to rumour, and counter rumour and seeing bodged collections of half truths appearing in other magazines *Play* decided to sort it out once for all. Yes, *Tekken 2* is coming out on the PlayStation – For CHRISTMAS 1996! Now, guys, don't you think it's time we concentrated on something a little closer to actually existing?

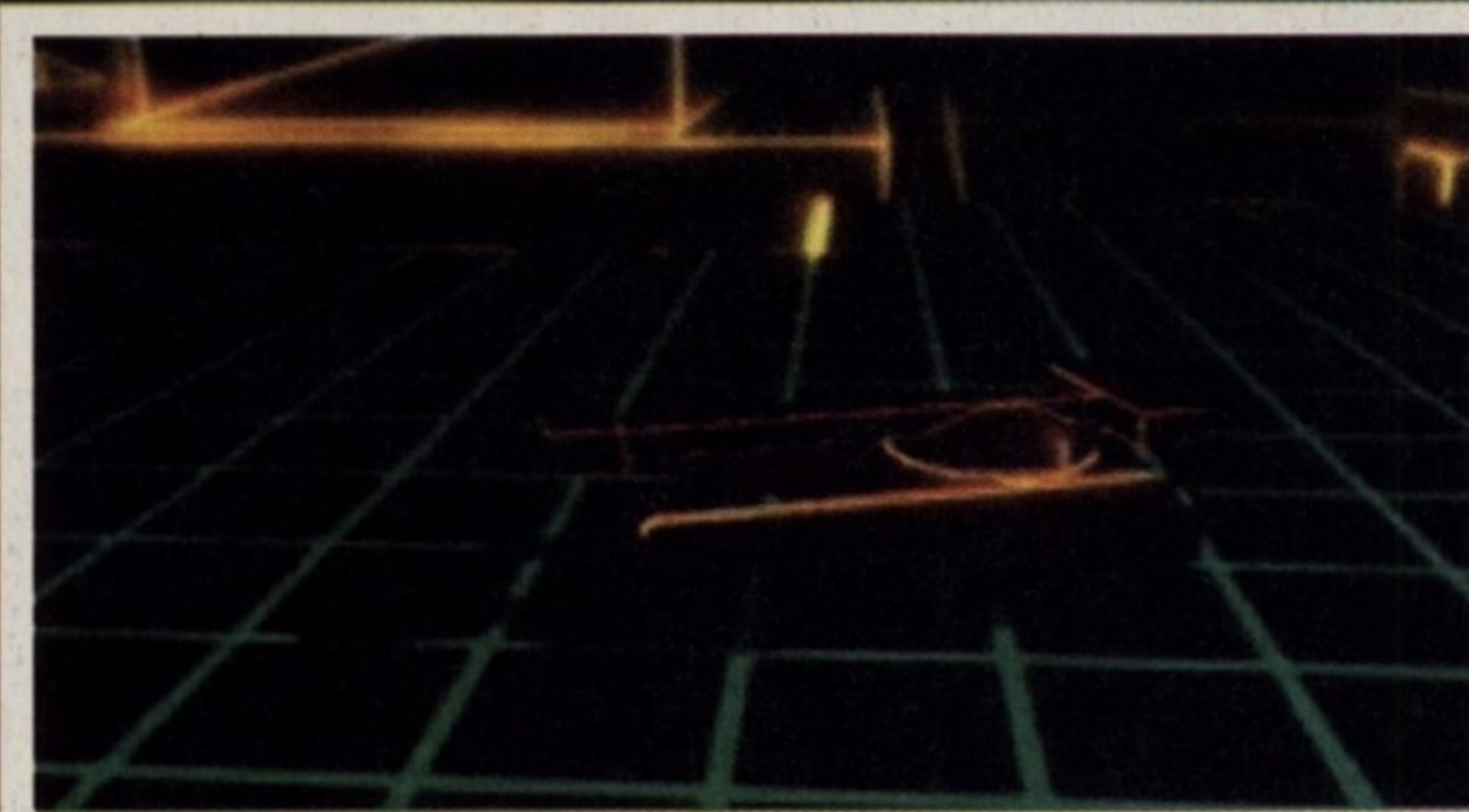
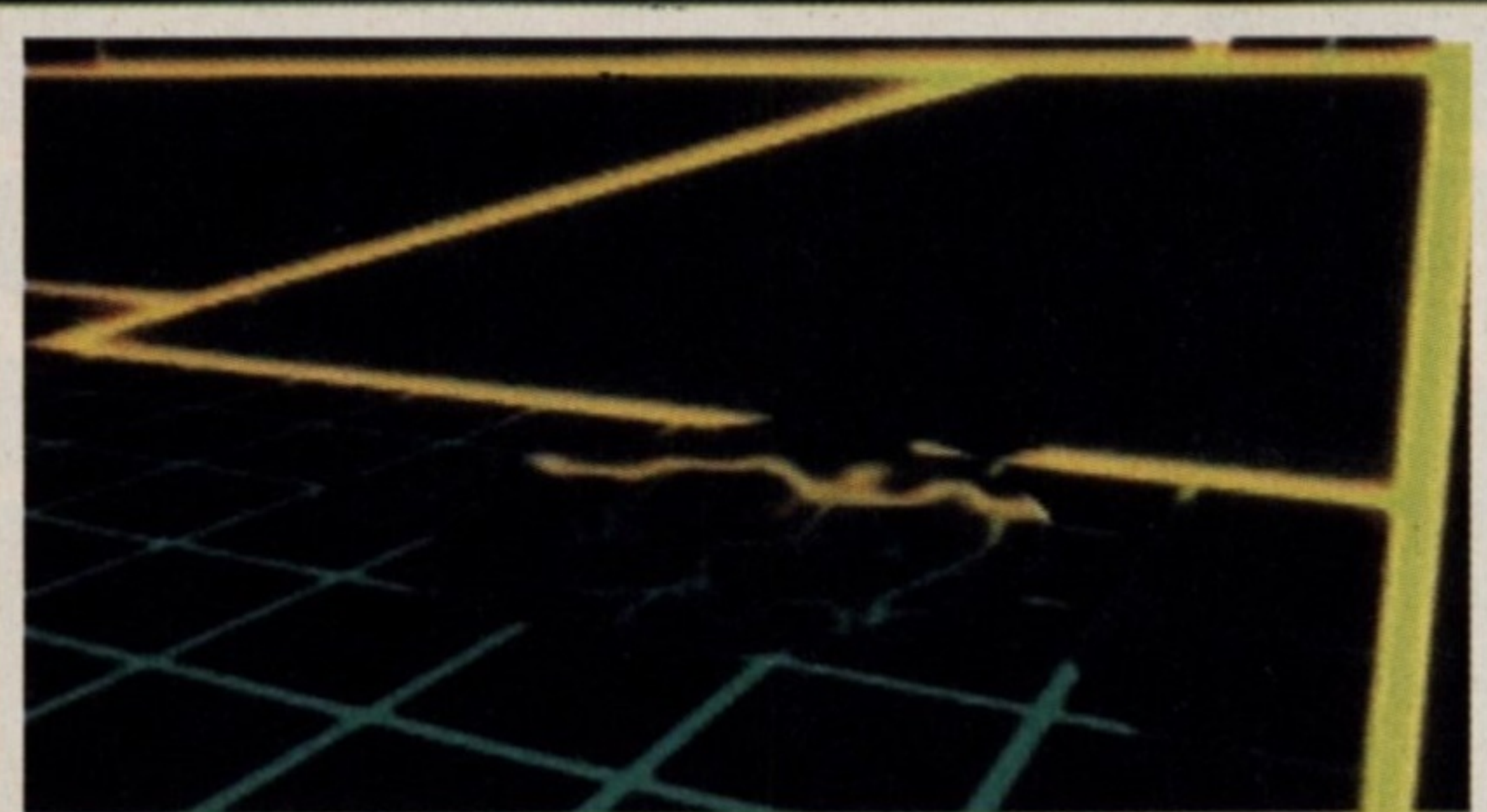
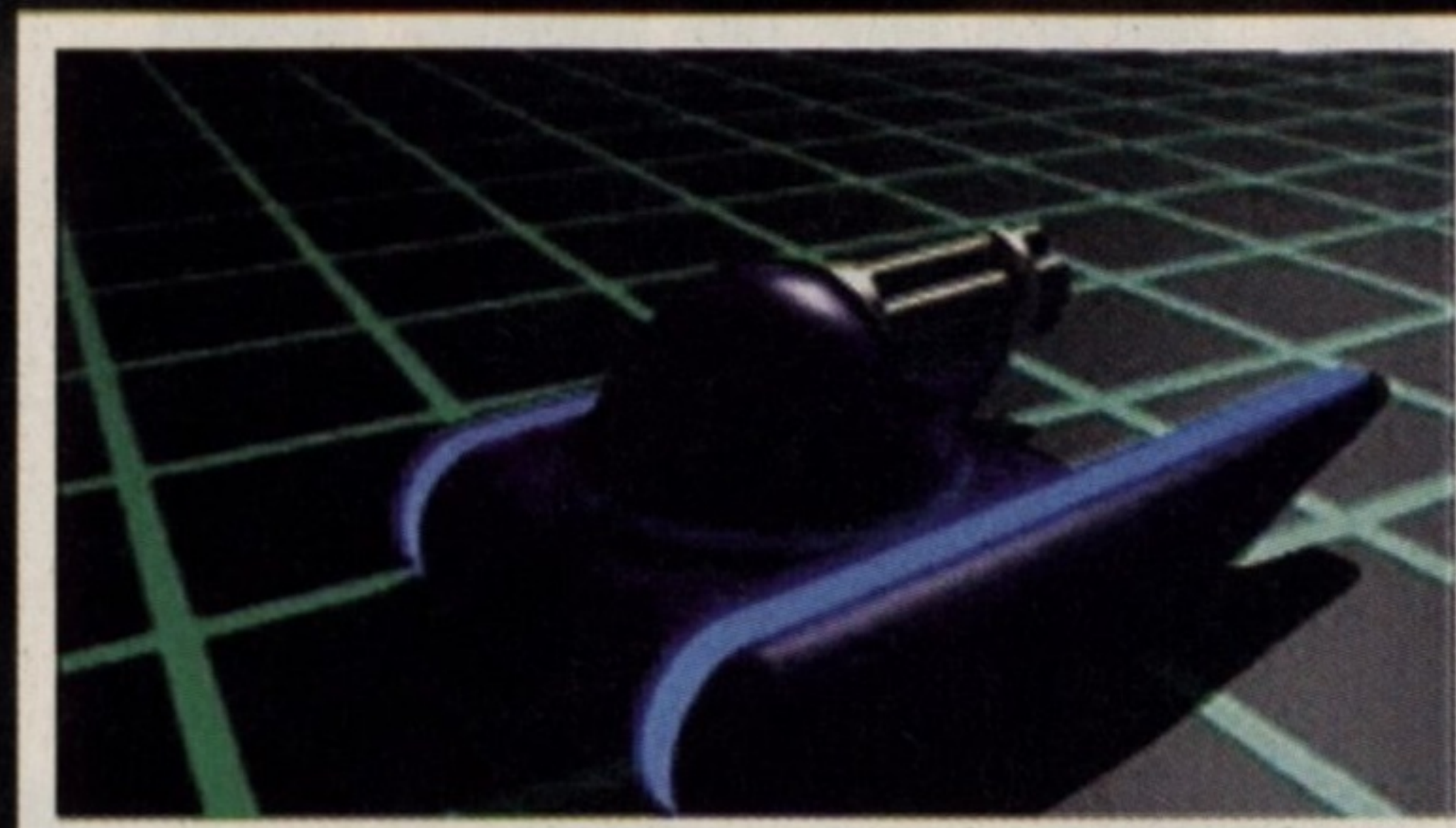


Let's Assault Rigs

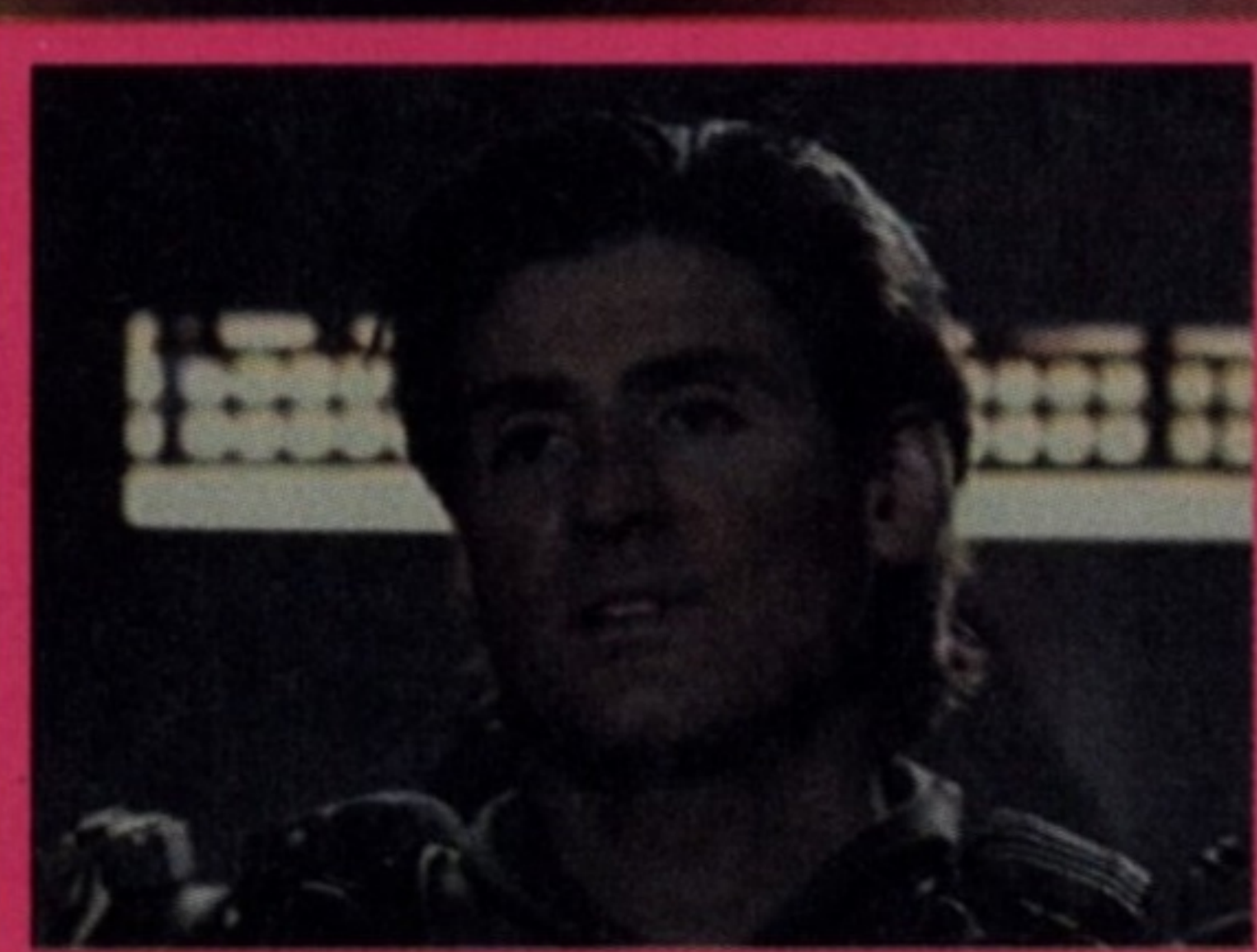
DBased in the future, where all sports games are played remotely over a network, *Assault Rigs* is a 3D combat game played in a computer generated virtual zone. The game can be played individually, or in network mode by connecting

PlayStations together.

The virtual battle zones have various obstacle, ramps and trenches to traverse in your mission to collect gems and power-ups, to help you defeat your opponents. *Assault Rigs*, from Sony Interactive Europe, will be hitting your cyberspace world this November.



Sony goes on the WarHawk path



Claimed to be one of the most 'advanced 3D futuristic arcade-style' games for the PlayStation, (don't they all?) *WarHawk* aims to take the traditional flight simulation genre into a new realm. The scenario: you take control of the most advanced aircraft of the future fighting in an all out war dictated by a brutal regime. With variable levels of flight simulation combined with hardcore shoot 'em up gameplay, this could be a winner.

WarHawk allows you to fly unhindered in an advanced 360° environment with rendered scenery. The gameplay involves air-to-air combat and air-ground combat, with numerous missions and directives for depth. Multiple weaponry, ground-strikes, tactical fighting plus some hidden fly-zones. We'll find out whether it's any good or not when we target it for evaluation next month.



Yes, Doom really is coming

DIt's official, the classic 3D world of *Doom* is coming to the PlayStation. *Doom* originally made waves on the PC in 1993, for being at the forefront of gaming with its innovative 3D engine and texture mapped worlds to explore, with the odd bad guy to shoot in the process. The link-up option really made this game, allowing players to battle each other in virtual 3D worlds, making this one of the most popular games ever, and spawning numerous clones.

Doom is being translated for the PlayStation by Williams, rather than the original developers id, for GT Interactive and should appear on our screens by Xmas. If the PlayStation version is going to be anything like the PC version, *Doom* should be something to ask Santa to put in your Xmas stocking, as well as the Xmas issue of *Play* which will feature a full review.



Ridge Racer raves on...

News is being to emerge on the form of Namco's sequel to *Ridge Racer*, *Rave Racer*. The update, due around April next year, boasts a long list of improvements including various track surfaces, changing weather conditions, and even some ramps. More importantly, the game also has five new tracks and will have a network option to link-up two PlayStations for some real racing action. Only one track and no two-player option is the one irritation *Play* has with the otherwise excellent *Ridge Racer*. As you'll see by our top review on page 69.

Namco is also beaver away on several new titles including *Ace Driver*, *Cyber Cycles*, *Alpine Racer*, and *Match Breakers*. The arcade expert is also planning a compilation disc containing several conversions of their old arcade classics like *Dig Dug* and *Galaga*, to appear on a kind of 'greatest hits' CD.



Telstar soldiers on

Designed solely for the PlayStation, *Lone Soldier* is an all-out action-arcade style shoot 'em-up that is claimed to combine stunning graphics with classic playability. Your soldier must blast his way through four main worlds the scenarios: The Jungle, fighting a hostile South American regime, Canyon, with a treacherous landscape to traverse, Middle East, fighting against some hardcore armies, and the Alien Situation, in warfare with some strange beings with stranger weapons.

The game is to feature several viewpoints and is claimed to set the standard for shooting titles on the PlayStation. *Lone Soldier* is being developed by Telstar Electronic Studios and will also be reviewed next issue.



More balls on its way from Warner

Sequel hell is upon us. Warner Interactive Entertainment is planning to release *Hardball 5* on the PlayStation during the first quarter '96. The game is being developed by old *Hardball* gurus, Accolade. The PlayStation version is to have new player animations and various views from around the field, including a 'closest to the plate' view for some real action.

Also in the game will be a bonus 'Legends' league that allows you to replay great moments in *Hardball* history (!), with a very comprehensive stats construction set. *Play* will keep all you *Hardball* fans informed as and when more details emerge.

Company Vitae



ouldn't it be nice never to get ripped off by a software house? For all games to have been properly invested in, released without being rushed and over priced?

OK, it's never going to happen, but those guardians of the games world, the *Play* team, are keeping files. Oh yes, we're watching you corporate UK, and we're getting ready to dish the dirt. Each month we'll be printing the ultimate rundown of the biggest brands in the business and just how they have been performing.

Anybody know a good lawyer?

Corporate File 1: Virgin Interactive Entertainment.

Name: Virgin Interactive Entertainment

Age: 11

Mission Statement: Nah, too hip for that

Virgin? Oh no, don't tell me Richard Branson's into video games as well then?

"Not any more, he isn't - sold it all to the Blockbuster video chain about a year ago."

Who?

"Y'know, 'The entertainment team' and all that, 600 odd video stores up and down the country."

Right, so did everything go to pot without the Branson magic touch then?

"Um, actually, Virgin has gone from being a sort of OK kind of publisher, to selling more CD games than anyone else, top notch stuff in fact."

Really, like what?

"Well lately they've released games like *Doom II*, *Earthworm Jim*, *Indycar*, *NASCAR*, *The Lion King*..."

...What, the dodgy Disney film?

"The kids loved it, so shush."

Yes, we-ll, what else?

"They're pretty famous for aggressive advertising and well stylish presentation. They also give out some of the best freebies in the industry."

What? Get back to the games!

"Well, on CD-ROM there's all the new LucasArts stuff like *Full Throttle* and *Dark Forces*. Also titles like *Tilt* and *Screamer*."

That's more like it, so what about on the PlayStation?

"Well, officially, there's a flight sim cum shoot 'em-up called *Agile Warrior*, and that's your lot before Christmas."

I thought you said these guys were big?

"We don't believe them either. We reckon they are probably being very cagey and corporate, you know, playing proverbial cards close to proverbial chests etc. It might not happen before Christmas, but there's no way all those CD games won't hit the PlayStation. They'd be nuts not to release *Doom II*, *Dark Forces* or *Full Throttle*, wouldn't they?"

Ok, Ok, Ok. So they're wonderful. Mister Clean himself. Now dish some dirt.

"Well, don't mention DMA Design or id Software."

What the guys behind *Lemmings* and *Doom*?

"They're the ones."

So why's that then?

"Well, they use to give games to Virgin, who thought they had them all signed up to produce loads of new blockbusters, but it didn't happen."

Why not?

"A couple of rivals had bigger chequebooks/nicer smiles/were better in bed. Choose any two out of three."

So, what was the effect?

"Do your sums pal. Sales of 50,000 x £40=£2,000,000, that's a lot of money to lose access to."

Ouch! OK, but what about the games they do have the rights to?

"Well, to be honest, most are all right these days, some are excellent and it's a brand name you can probably trust."

Most likely to say:

"You'll love this, it's the new one from LucasArts."

Least Likely to say:

"You'll love this, it's the new *Doom* game from id."

Warped Metallic Visions

In a setting described as a 'frightening vision of a future world', *Twisted Metal* is a car game with a big old difference. Driving around is only part of the game, with 12 very different cars, using specialised weapons for some heavyweight blasting and loads of strange road obstacles like ramps to jump over, armed combat is definitely the name of the twisted game here.

The setting takes place over five different fully 3D environments and allows various combinations of play – there is a single player mode, a split screen two player mode, and a two player mode via a 'combat cable' link-up with another PlayStation machine.

Featuring some deranged vehicles and humans, *Twisted Metal* is being developed for Sony by a Californian team of programmers and is set to be released sometime in November. Look out for a full review soon.



▲ **Twisted Metal: A frightening vision of a future world. Honest. There's 12 different cars, loadsa weapons, combat, nice graphics and it's reviewed next ish.**

Interplay sent to cyberia

Interplay have announced three new titles that are due for release soon on the PlayStation. The first title will be *Cyberia*, an intense puzzle game combining arcade/action elements. It's set in a future where global terrorists rule and humanity lives on the brink of destruction. The game is to feature fully motion captured characters and Silicon Graphics rendered scenery and animation. *Cyberia* is set for release by the end of the year.

The following two titles will be *Descent*, a combat flight sim set in a future world where an alien race is heading to Earth and you must battle to stop them, and *Aftermath*, a 3D side-scrolling shoot 'em up which combines fast shooting action, puzzle solving and plenty of blood! The two games are due to be released in the first quarter of '96.

Actually, not virtually

Gremlin are on track to release their first titles in their Actua Sports series by the end of the year. The first title, *Actua Golf*, takes you into the world of driving ranges, woods and irons. The game boasts fully motion captured golfers, and multiple camera views, with an option to follow the action with a triple view system. The game features live commentary, multi-player options and 3D rendered scenery.

Their other title to be released is *Actua Soccer*, is a footy game with fully motion captured players, 44 real international teams and an infinite virtual camera placement system. This means that the camera may be placed practically anywhere above the pitch. Gremlin also have more releases planned in the Actua Series, and *Play* will bring you all the news as it happens.



Shock Wave Assault

Electronic Arts are busy developing the PlayStation version of the sexy 3DO game *Shock Wave Assault*. The game is based in the future where the fate of the Earth hangs in the balance. You take the role of a rookie pilot who must battle to save our planet from a devastating alien takeover. Flying through various zones, based on actual Earth locations such as Paris, you must battle to secure the areas from the aliens by blasting everything in sight.

The 3DO version had lots of full-motion-video clips interspersed between the stages to give advice and information about the missions. These will be translated to the PlayStation and should give the game a very 'interactive movie' feel. *Play* should have the full review especially for you soon...



Empire Pinballs the Braindead

Empire Interactive have announced their plans to release *Pro Pinball* and *Braindead 13* for the PlayStation. *Pro Pinball* is a pinball simulator featuring some very realistic pinball action on a real computerised table, and should be released in February next year.

Braindead 13 combines classic B-movie action with comic cartoon characters, to produce an interactive adventure with some really superb animation. *Braindead 13* is due for release imminently.

Finally, Empire is also planning to release another game, *Flying Corps* which should



be available in April or May next year. Details are scant at the moment, but we promise we'll bring you more news as information is released.



NFL clubbed by Acclaim



The PlayStation version of NFL Quarterback

Club '96 is shaping up nicely. The action takes place in 3D rendered stadiums, includes full-motion video clips and "Ultra-Smooth Cam" instant

replays, so it should at least look rather special.

It includes a playbook of over 800 offensive and defensive plays, has all the NFL teams and a comprehensive feature-list. It's promised for November, and we've got high hopes for it. Expect the full *Play* review treatment next issue.

◀ NFL Quarterback Club '96: big game, big blokes, big pitch and bloody big instruction manual.

Sporty Sony gets extreme

ESPN *Extreme Sports* is the new 'human-powered' sports game from Sony Computer Entertainment Europe. The 'human-powered' element is derived from a curious skateboard-like attachment (God knows how much that'll cost) which connects to the PlayStation to try and add an extra dimension of play. There are four events in this game. Street luge, roller blading, skateboarding and mountain biking.

The action takes place over six courses ranging from Utah to Italy, and also has a two player split screen option to add an extra element of gameplay. As well as the racing aspect to the game, stunts are an integral part of your performance. Trying your hand at 'moguls', 'ollies', 'half-pipes' and catching some '6-foot air' is definitely the way forward in this little number.

On another note, Sony are sponsoring the British Open Extreme In-Line

Championships. The games involve the 'most aggressive' in-line skating you're ever likely to see, with stunts such as 'spine ramps', 'verts' and 'street courses'. (*Play* has just decided we've got a vacancy for anyone who can make sense of this – please apply in writing to the normal address).

The games will be taking place on the 21st October (ie. now) but the venue hadn't been confirmed as we went to press. Still, we'll review the game next ish.



Bikes 'n' Brusiers hit the road

Electronic Arts have announced the imminent release of the motorbiking-rocker's speed game *Road Rash*. The game is to feature footage from several rock bands' videos as well as a plethora of soundtracks from six 'hot alternative music' bands, including *Soundgarden*, *Swervedriver*, *Therapy* and *Monster Magnet*.

Road Rash also features real digitised graphics, used in combination with artist rendered scenes. The game is basically a race-combat game, and playing dirty is the only way to go. Also included in the live action video sequences are professionally directed stunts for some gritty realism. *Road Rash* should be ready for a review next issue.



The Revolution looms

Popular arcade game *Revolution X* is being converted to the PlayStation by Acclaim. *Revolution X* contains five levels of non-stop action where gamers must destroy the New Order Nation that is controlling the minds of its deviant and discontented youth.

The gameplay features non-linear non-stop shooting action from California to England where there is no pre-defined method of play. Instead, the format of the game allows gamers to choose their own goals and directions. The game also features the rock band Aerosmith. *Revolution X* is to be released by the end of the year.

Bazooka power!

Johnny Bazookatone is a rock 'n' roll adventure where the eponymous hard-rock guitar hero has had his perfectly pitched guitar, Anita, stolen by the evil L. Diablo. As the protagonist of this little tale, you must find said Mr. Diablo and blow his knackers off. Sorry, recover your guitar. This is of some urgency, as the whole of the nation is apparently suffering from not hearing Bazookatone's dulcet tones.

Johnny Bazookatone is a US Gold game and the glam-rock pop fest should be out before Christmas.



Free Horror Vids!

Yes kids, the season of the witch is upon us once again and doubtless you'll be out on the night hassling old grannies for sweets and valuables. But wait! Wouldn't you much rather spend the dark, dank nights curled up on the sofa with your sweetie in front of some good old fashioned horror flicks?

Warner Home Video continue their trendy *Beyond Vision* and *Terror Vision* series' in October by releasing such timeless shocker films as *Salem's Lot*, *The Legend of the 7 Golden Vampires*, *The Lost Boys*, and *The Fearless Vampire Killers* in chilling widescreen. To mark this historic occasion and of course to ride on the fact that it's Halloween, *Play* has teamed up with Warner to offer our readers the chance to win some video nasties!

We're giving away two stomach-churning sets of four videos containing the precious cult horror gems mentioned above if you can answer the following simple question:

Q: Which of the following is not a Warner Home Video series?

- ▶ a. *Beyond Vision*.
- ▶ b. *Terror Vision*.
- ▶ c. *Gut-Wrenching Gory Vomit-O-Vision*?

In the indian with... Peter Molyneux

In the first of a series, *Play* takes the great games designers out for a curry. First, the man who created *Populous*, *Theme Park*, *Syndicate*, *Magic Carpet*, *Hi-Octane*...and more.

Play: What makes a good game? Hey, what do you think makes a good curry?

PM: Something you can pick up in ten seconds and want to keep on playing even though you really need to get rid of that curry.

Play: Who thinks up Bullfrog's games? How do you decide which ideas to begin work on?

PM: It's a combination of me and everyone else at Bullfrog. We generally show the various ideas off to as many Bullfrog people we can and then take a vote. The highest number of votes decides which is the first project we tackle and so on.

Play: Is developing for the new systems any more fun than 16-bit, or even 8-bit, or is hardware simply a consumer's worry?

PM: Definitely more fun – a powerful system means that I can get much closer to the ideas in my head. 8 bit systems were frustrating to develop on because the end result always ended up looking so primitive.

Play: Bullfrog's getting a bit big these days, do you still program?

PM: Yes I still do some programming.

Play: Video games were supposed to be the new Rock and Roll, what happened?

PM: You could hardly call programmers Rock 'n' Roll stars. I wouldn't want to admit to having a poster of the programming team at Psygnosis on my bedroom wall.

Play: Fair enough, on the Rock 'n' Roll theme, have you ever met a video games groupie? If so, what did you do? And did you respect yourself in the morning?

PM: Unfortunately, blonde nubile 18 year old female games players are a bit thin on the ground.

Play: Sony is trying to make the PlayStation cool, and bring the twenty-somethings back into video games. Is the video games industry cool yet?

PM: It's definitely cooler than it's ever been. In a recent edition of a US magazine, computer programmer was voted the second most wanted job after stock broker.

Play: Is the PlayStation cool?

PM: Of course it is, it's grey!

Play: So, do you own up to being a computer programmer at parties?

PM: Never – being a computer programmer is one of the biggest turnoffs around, second only to sanitary worker in the undesirable stakes.

Play: So what do you say you do?

PM: I generally pass myself off as a neurosurgeon.

Play: Ha! Anyway, now Electronic Arts have bought you out and you're stormingly rich, what have you been spending it all on?

PM: Very big toys!

Play: I heard something about spending nearly 600 grand on buying up the McLaren footage of Le Mans, is that really true?

PM: No, it's not Bullfrog, it's actually EA who's done the McLaren deal.

Play: What's all this about designing your own house, what special moves, er sorry, items are going to be in it?

PM: Yes I am designing my own house which will be a shrine to hi tech. It will be riddled with secret passages and will also have a batcave with LCD glass on all the windows. Naturally enough, the famous Japanese shower toilet will also be in situ.

Play: What, the one that monitors your cleanliness on an ablution by ablution basis so you always feel kinda deep down clean?

PM: That's the one.

Play: List the following in order of importance – cash, cars, football, video games, women

PM: Women, video games, cash, cars and football.

Play: Stranded on a Desert Island time, only this one's got its own grand prix circuit. Pick the most desirable combination to have of car, woman, footy video, video game and games machine.

PM: An Aston Martin with Sharon Stone playing a footy game on the PlayStation.

PLAY+
information

- Name: Peter Molyneux
- Job: Jt. Managing Director Bullfrog/Vice President EA
- Fave curry: Chicken madras
- Fave game: *Super Streetfighter II*

Workstations

Prepare

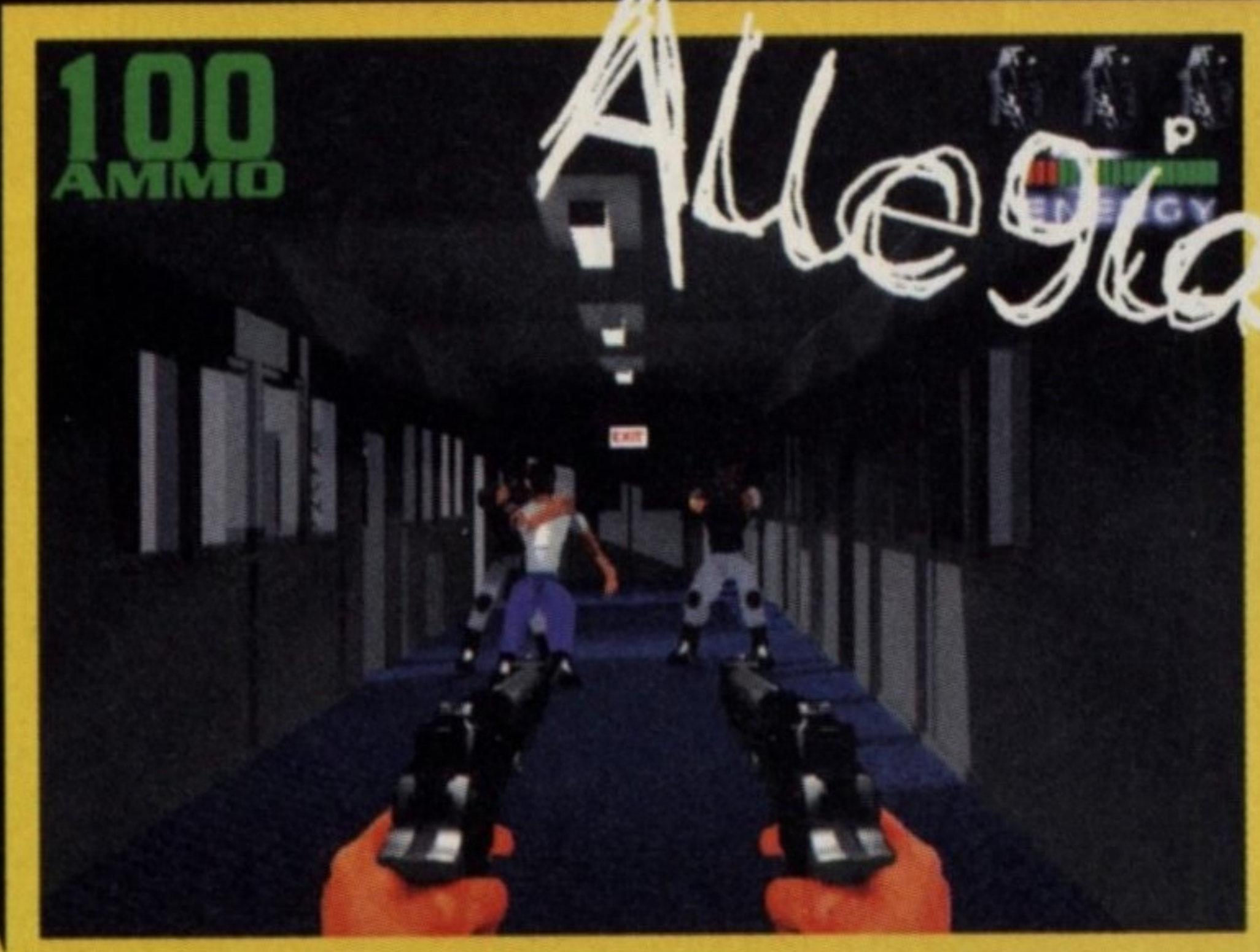
to be amazed!

In *Play* we have made a conscious decision to go for quality over quantity. Instead of flabbing our magazine out with page upon page of mediocre preview titles we will be using these Workstation sections to pinpoint what we believe will be the biggest PlayStation releases of the future and stretching our expenses to the max, driving up

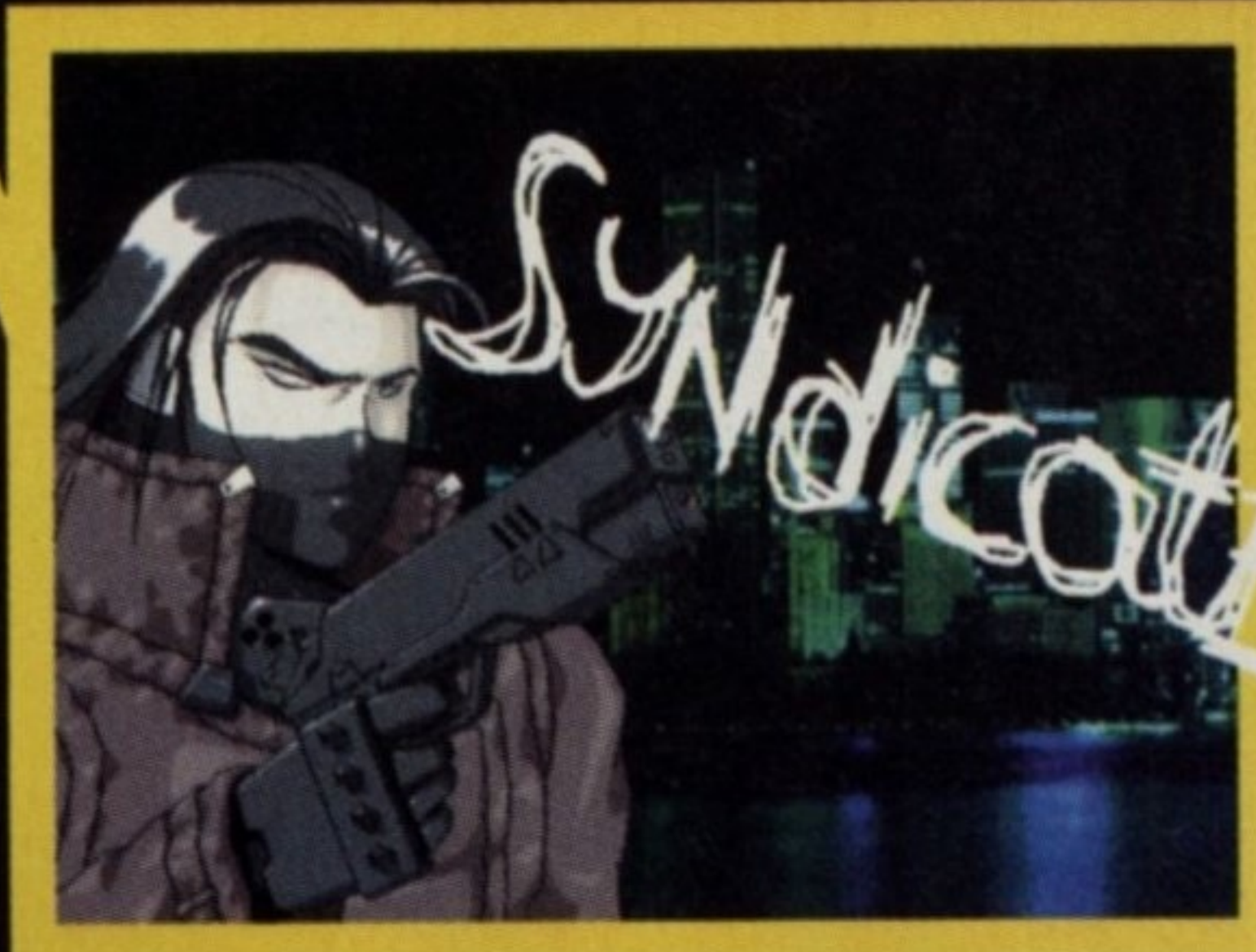
and down the country talking to programmers and development-teams about their latest projects.

This issue, using our skill and judgement, we've picked a quintet of quality out of the mass of games being produced for Sony's console at the moment.

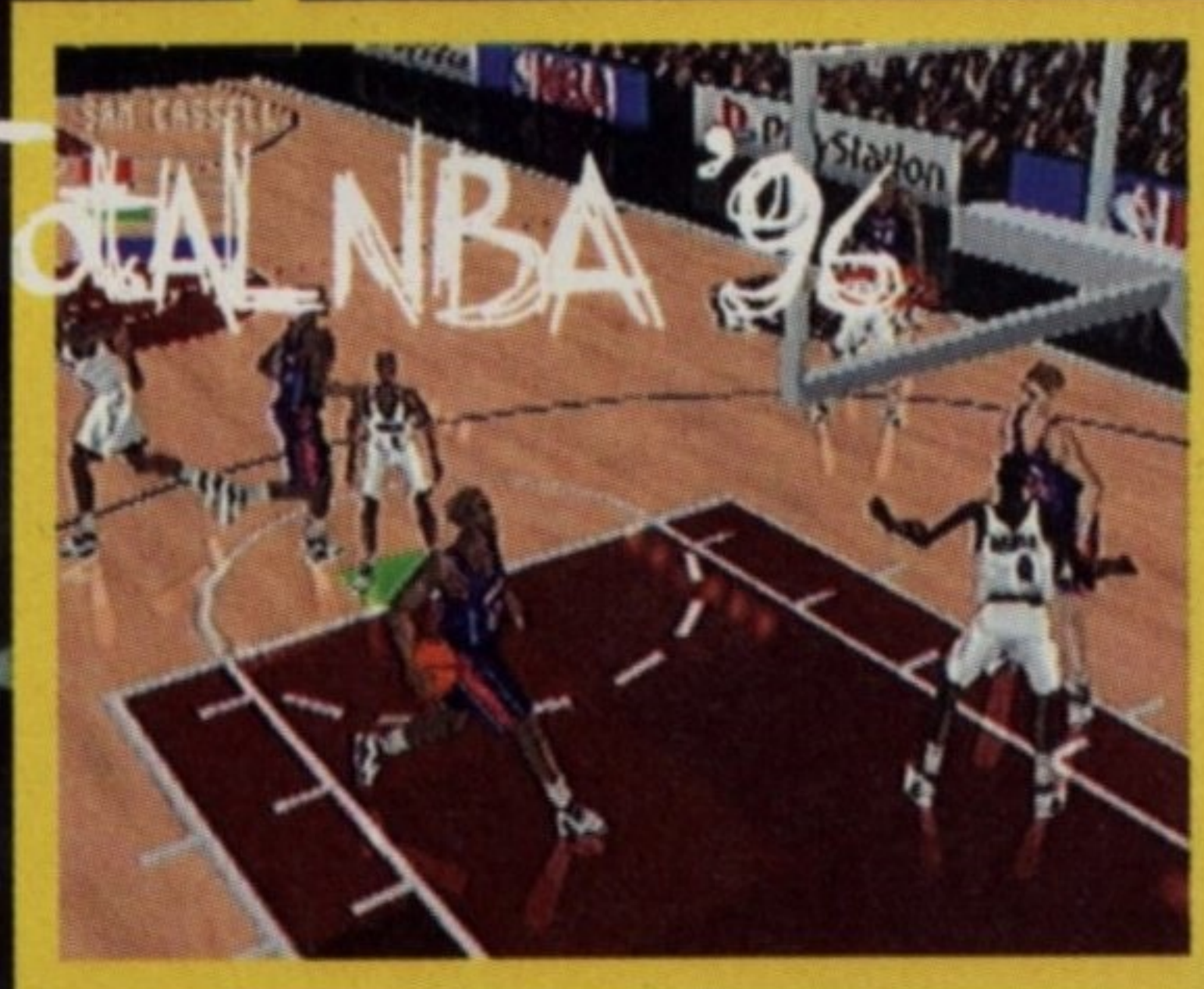
Enjoy!



Allegiance



Syndicate Wars



Total NBA '96

G-Police

Total NBA '96

Fade To Black

Allegiance

Syndicate Wars

20

24

28

32

36

Blade Runner, Batman, Judge Dredd, all set in dark, gothic, forbidding cities, all dealing with law and order, or the lack of it. There's a new cyberpunk classic brewing, and it's a game being developed in, of all of places, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire. Ian put on his flak jacket and went to meet the G-Police.

G-P



PLAY+
information

- Design team: wheelhaus
- Team leader: Dominic Robinson
- Where at: 30% complete
- Target release: April '96
- Publisher: Sony Interactive

Police

Futuristic nightmares are a common theme for films, games, books and sundry other types of media. It seems creatives aren't always the most optimistic of people, and *G-Police*, developed for Sony Interactive by the Wheelhaus design team (who have also been working on *Assault Rigs*, a futuristic 3D tank game we'll be reviewing next issue) is another project which is set in a viciously evil vision of the expected future.

Essentially, a G-Policeman is a helicopter patrolman, armed with ridiculously high-powered weapons, whose beat is a city sector in an off-world manned space colony. The colonies, or domes as they're called, are inhabited by the renegades, drop-outs and outcasts of society. And that's just the cops. In fact, all members of the *G-Police* crew are there because their faces don't fit on Earth. All apart from the character you take control of, that is, who is one of the few volunteers to serve in the off-world domes. You see, you don't get many volunteers for a job

where the average life expectancy is three months. Strange that!

At the moment, Wheelhaus plan to incorporate the relative personalities and histories of your *G-Police* colleagues into the game itself. For instance, some missions involve teaming up with wingmen, who either operate under your control or on their own, thanks to the game's artificial intelligence. This is, however, limited, so don't expect completely independent action from your CPU colleagues. Given that some of your workmates aren't the most stable people in the world, this can lead to the guys who are supposed to be covering your back flipping out and turning their powered-up guns on you, the crowd, themselves, whatever. Smart!

As I've hinted, the basic structure of *G-Police* is a mission-based combat helicopter sim (actually, it's more of a gyrocopter, but let's not split hairs) set in a city, with a properly rendered cityscape to boot. You can fly down streets, past skyscrapers, or above the skyline using any one of the multiple first and third person perspective views included.

The plan is for the action to be split

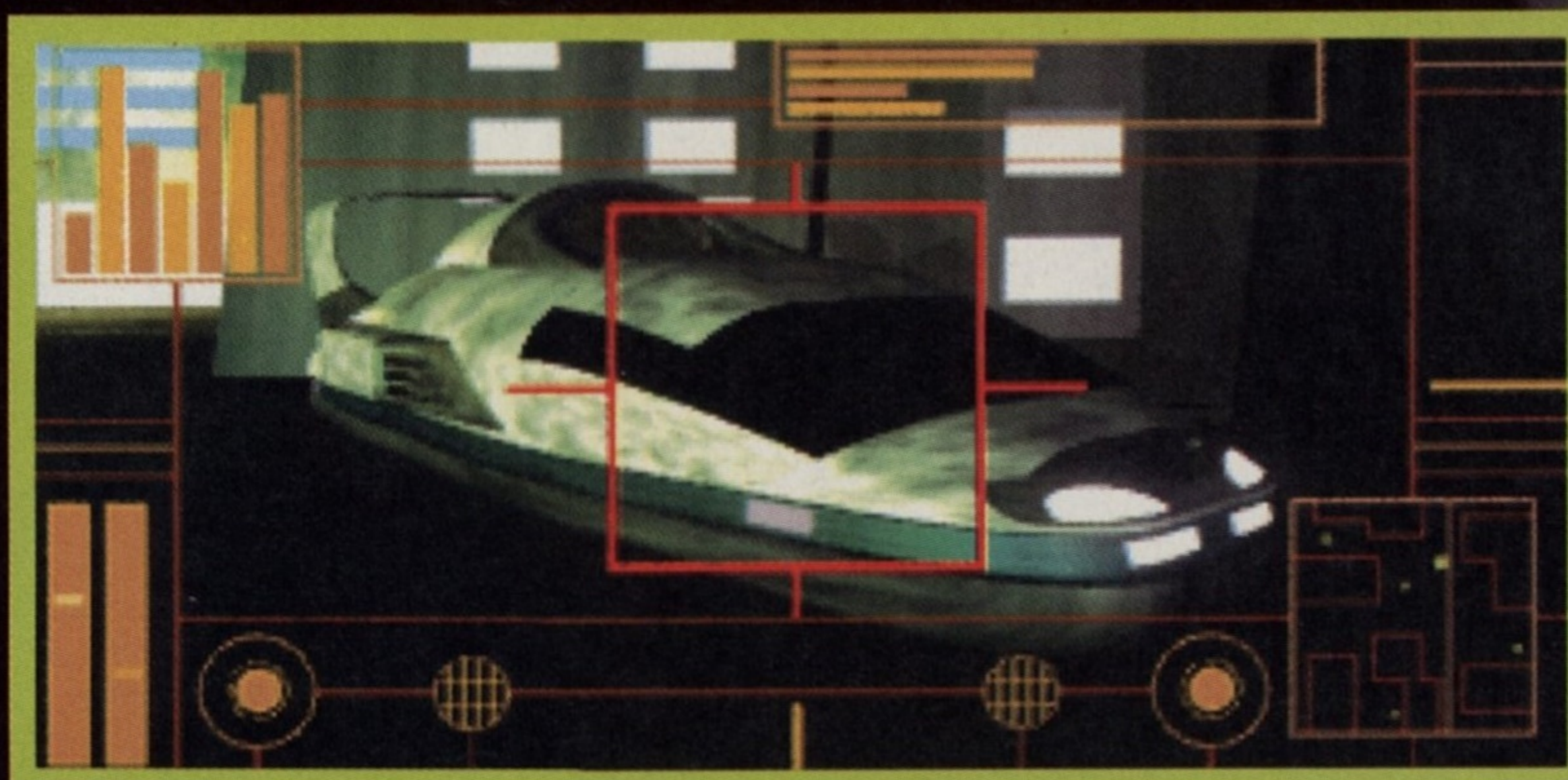


into five episodes of ten missions, each set in separate sectors of the city. Tasks involved include training missions, escorting duties, assassination-prevention, reconnaissance, search and destroy orders, hi-action battles and patrols. The patrol missions act as an interlude to the main action, and also allow an in-game sub-plot to develop. Instead of acting within a scripted scenario, patrols offer a free run of the city, and it's up to you to travel round reacting to what ever misdemeanours the citizens get up to, be it jay-walking, rioting or major terrorist activity.

▲ Get your motor runnin', burnin' down the highway, lookin' for adventure, or whatever comes my way. Yeah baby it was meant to happen...born to be *G-Police*!

▼ Gotham City's got nothing on this. Especially when you're lost. That building looks like it's staring at me. Run away, run away!

▼ What kind of person would own a space age vehicle like this? Over to you David. Well we know he's got no taste, and is about to die. It must be the mayor.



Dealing successfully with these crime cameos whilst on patrol (roughly every five missions or so) is also a good medium for impressing the powers that be (which, given the nature of *G-Police* are of the mysterious type). Advancement through the game is on a kind of merit

Here in my car...

1

Whatever view you look at it from, and whatever modifications it's had to it, it's still a gyrocopter. Have a nice day. I ask you. It should be die m*****g scum.



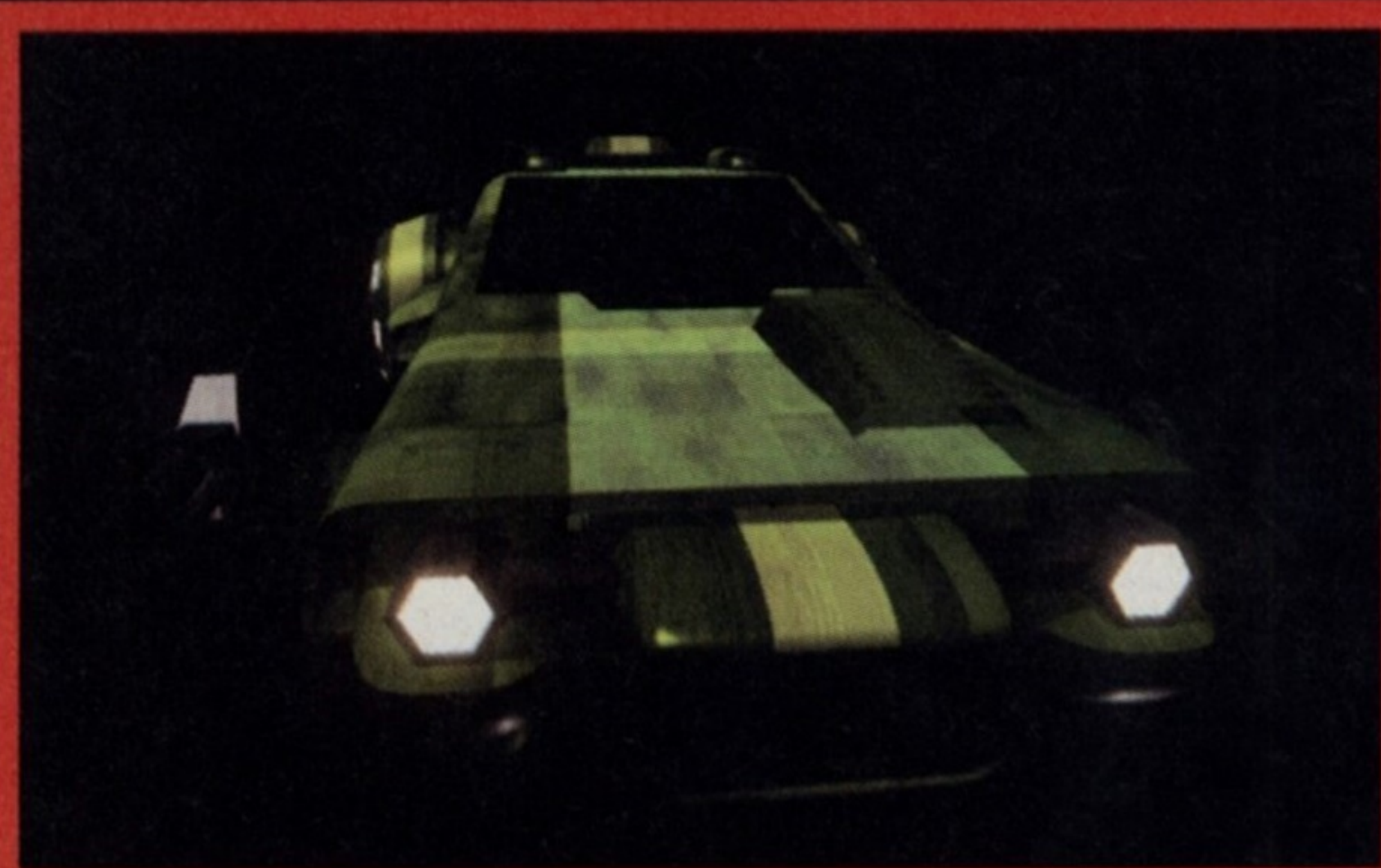
2

Here's the grey, smooth metallic model. Note the polished exterior, the leather upholstery. Or, simply look at the visual and go wow! Is this a screenshot? Which is what I did.



3

This is not a view you want to be looking at a G-Policeman at. Oh no. Isn't the way the machine gun is mounted on the side cool. Hey, it's the daddy.



system, where success builds trust in your abilities, and that is reflected in being given a higher security clearance and access to both better information and bigger weaponry. And there are plenty of weapons to choose from, including mini guns, virus attacks, virus shields, assorted types of rocket, cannons, strobe guns, flame-throwers... believe me, you're not going to be short of ways to kill people, sorry, make the dome a better place for all citizens to be at peace and prosper.

As well as the impressive 3D engine, *G-Police* features FMV cut scenes, which include motion-captured graphics rendered using the innovative flock of birds system. This relies on magnetic wire-captured analogue movement rather than the digital film re-production of multi camera-shot video footage, the system most publishers have decided to go with. Or in other words, a bloke jumps around in a wire harness, with the movement translated back to a computer workstation rather than a bloke with coloured balls placed around his person jumping around in front of lots of cameras placed at lots of angles, taped, and then edited to reproduce one moving image. Which is basically what optical motion capture consists of. Phew! The result of all this is some pretty fluid looking animations. The FMV breaks last from 30 seconds to two and a half minutes, so they have to be good. Rendered animations also appear at the beginning and end of each mission.

Your gyrocopter, which in this game is your home, castle and lifeline, is also your only means of transport. Originally, Wheelhaus hoped to include a couple of other vehicles but discovered that their routines meant that the gyrocopter was always the easiest choice to play with, and rather than including other vehicles

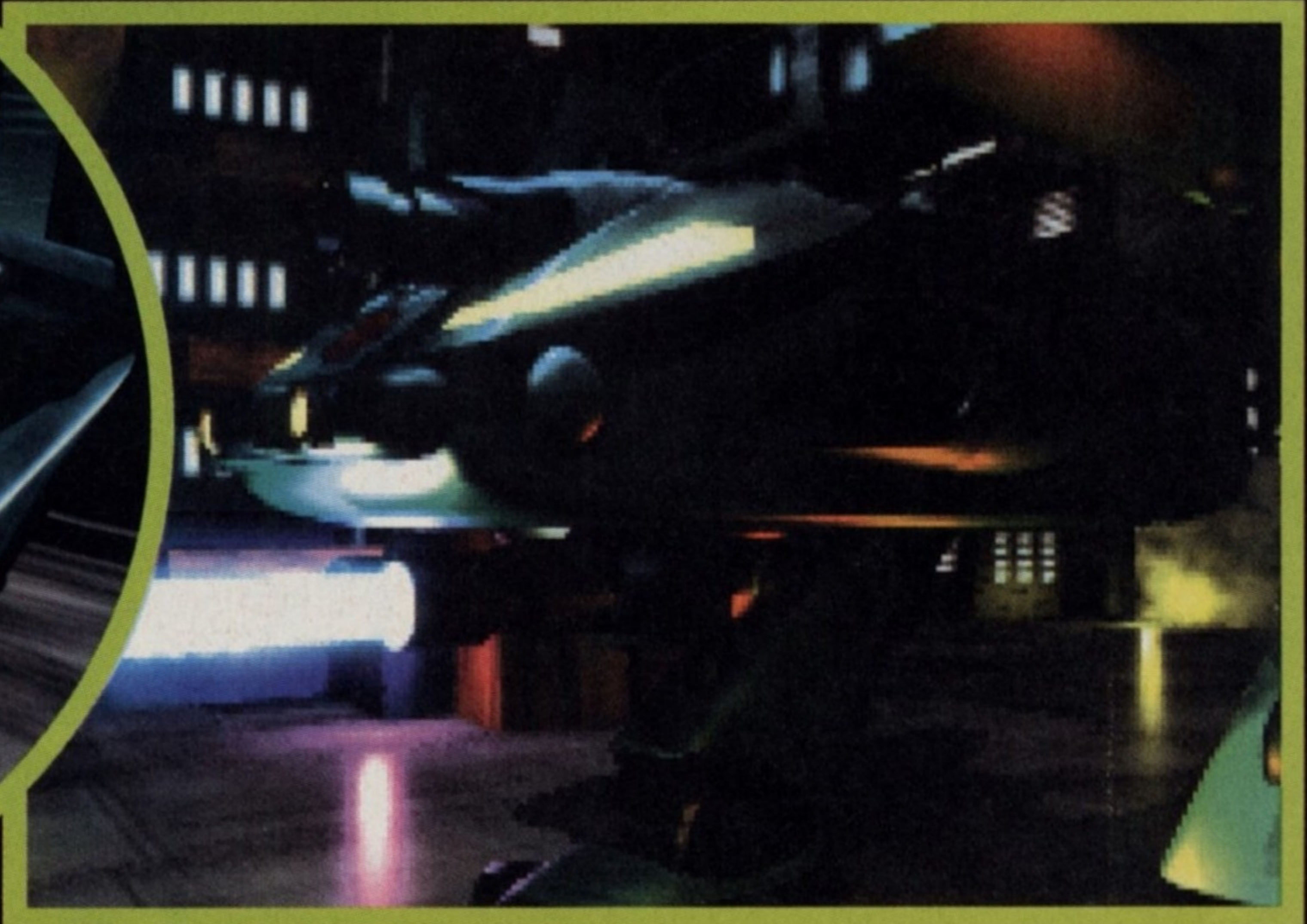
▲ Boom, shalak lak boom. You're history. Hah! I'll send flowers to your mother, punk.

purely for cosmetic reasons, decided to stick to gyrocopters. Well, that's their story anyway, and they're sticking to it.

The team is working on making the flight dynamics of the 'copter reflective of reality, although this will probably be tweaked a little to make staying in the air with a damaged craft a little easier. Some missions do require having to navigate a half-crippled machine back to the safety of headquarters once the main objective has been achieved. Tricky.

▼ Somewhere down there is a villan, an evil low down son of a gun. Actually, the city's full of them, which is why you've a little radar-cum-gunsight.





Deathmatch affair, probably set in various sectors of the city. At this stage, a full two-player career mode seems highly unlikely, although some kind of two-player patrol-based option is something the team is currently experimenting with.

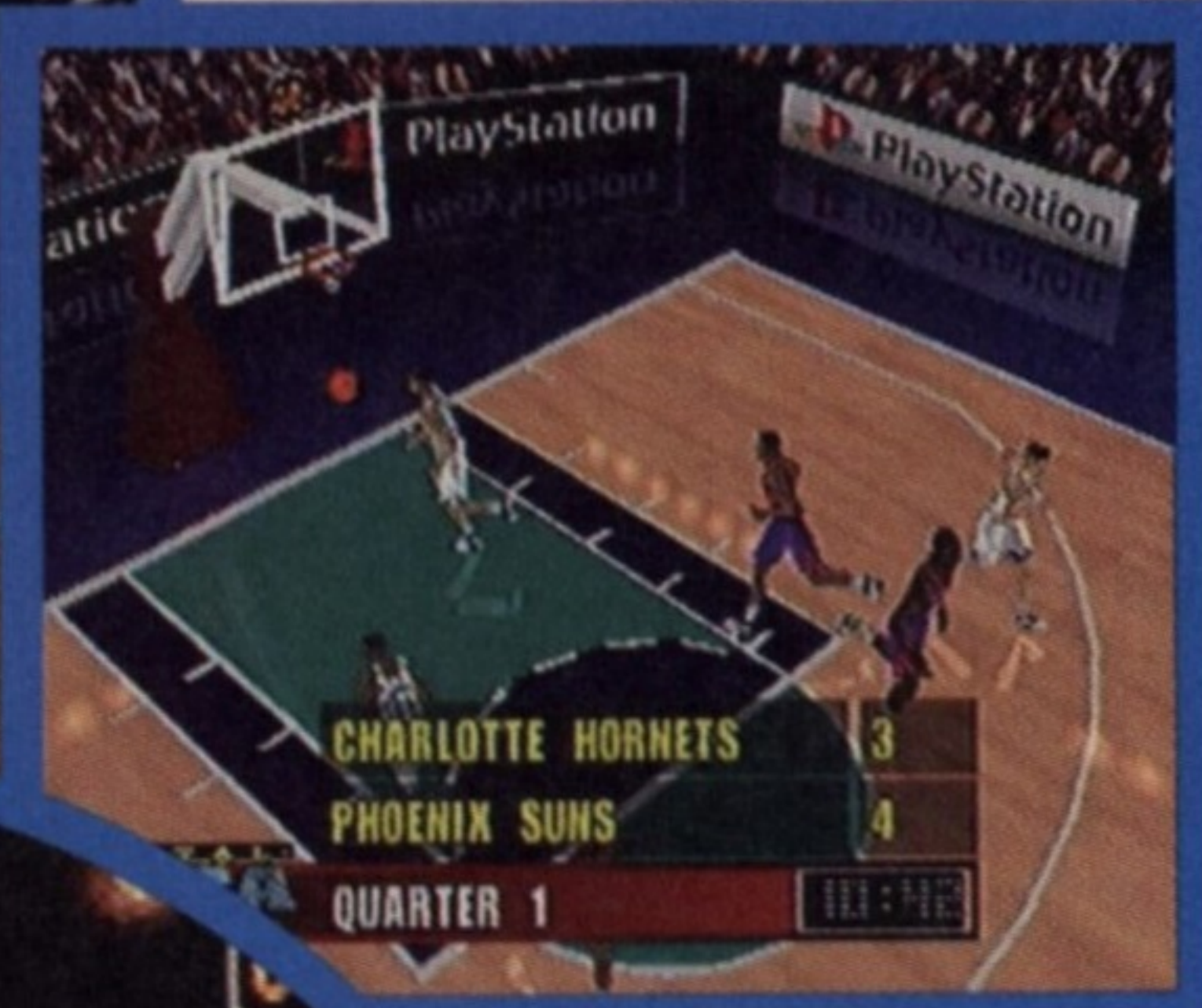
G-Police is one of the most exciting projects I've ever seen. The in-game atmosphere is shaping up to be properly dark and forbidding, the game engine looks solid and the mission scripts are packed full of variety. It's still early doors

yet, and this is first in-depth article on *G-Police* to be published in the world, but you can be sure you're going to be hearing a lot more about this game. *Play* will certainly be watching the rest of its development with a great deal of interest.

▲ When all this is finished, it's going to look super smooth. A bit like the intro on the left.

Although this is still in the concept stage at the moment, *G-Police* will also feature a multi-player mode. Given the themes of the main game though, and it's quest nature, this is likely to be more of a game within a game in the shape of a pure head to head





▲ I do like these reflections, check out the boards at the side and the way the arena lights bounce off the floor, and it's not even finished yet!

Total NBA

We're talking fast, realistic, and above all, good, basketball games. Can you think of any? *NBA Jam T.E.*? Not realistic enough. *NBA Live*? Not fast enough. *NBA Showdown*? Not good enough. **Total NBA**, the new PlayStation game coming from Sony for Christmas? Possibly. Ian Lynch slipped on his hi-tops and went looking for some one-on-one action.

PLAY information

- Design team: Sony London
- Team leader: Jules Burt
- Where at: 65% complete
- Target release: Christmas
- Publisher: Sony

Jules Burt? - Nah, never heard of him. *FIFA Soccer*? Now that I know. *FIFA* is the most popular 16-bit console footy game ever and Jules is the guy who came up with the original game blueprint. He also worked as a software engineer on EA's *Rugby World Cup '95*, the best-yet rugby sim. Not bad, eh?

Now, Jules may not exactly be as well known as, say Peter Molyneux (*Theme Park*, *Magic Carpet*) or Jon Hare (*Sensible Soccer*). But I reckon he's a bit of a star see. That's because Jules is now the leader of one of Sony's three London-based programming teams, and the producer/lead software engineer on *Total NBA*, which, two months from completion (at time of writing), is looking seriously smooth. And (whisper very quietly) will probably be the first PlayStation multi-tap compatible game available when it arrives on the shelves just before Christmas.

With games costing anywhere up to half a million dollars to make these

days, and Sony desperate to gain Nintendo-style cred for its in-house games division, there's a lot riding on a game like *Total NBA*.

You see, Sony's first crop of games have contained only a few stand out gob-smacking releases (see reviews, starting on page 43), and they've been promising journos, such as yours truly, that the next wave of games will be the business.

So setting my phaser to 'maximum scepticism' I tackled Jules and his team about the admittedly impressive-looking *Total NBA*.

"We're performing almost a dual role here," says Jules.

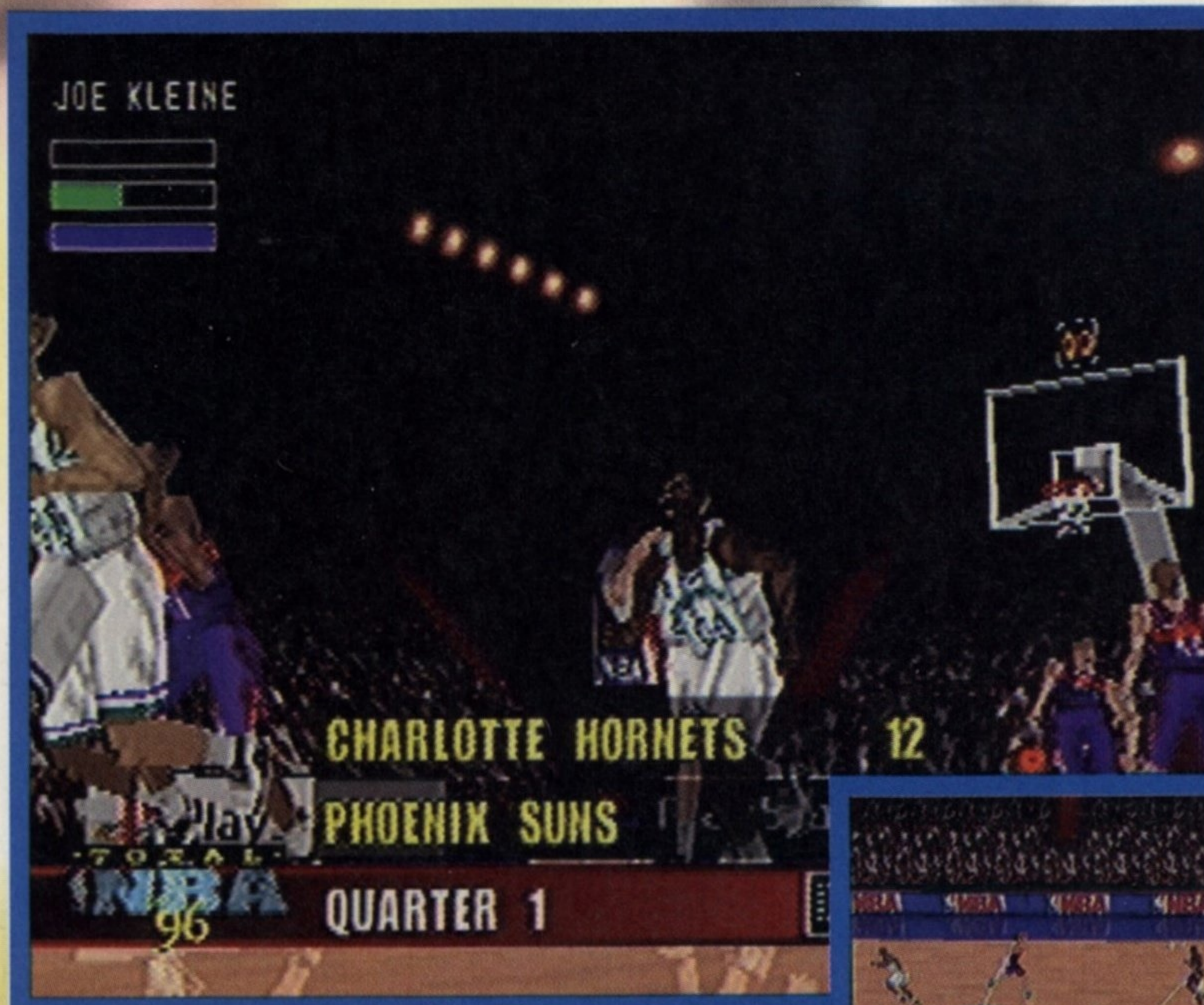
"We want to produce quality software and make a name for ourselves. But we also want to inspire third party

developers. We really feel we're leading the technology gap, and so, hopefully when Crystal Dynamics, Electronic Arts, Virgin et al. see what's actually been achieved with a sports product in three dimensions they will, hopefully, close that gap again. So we go on to make product that's, hopefully, successful and makes money but is also showcase product to show off what the

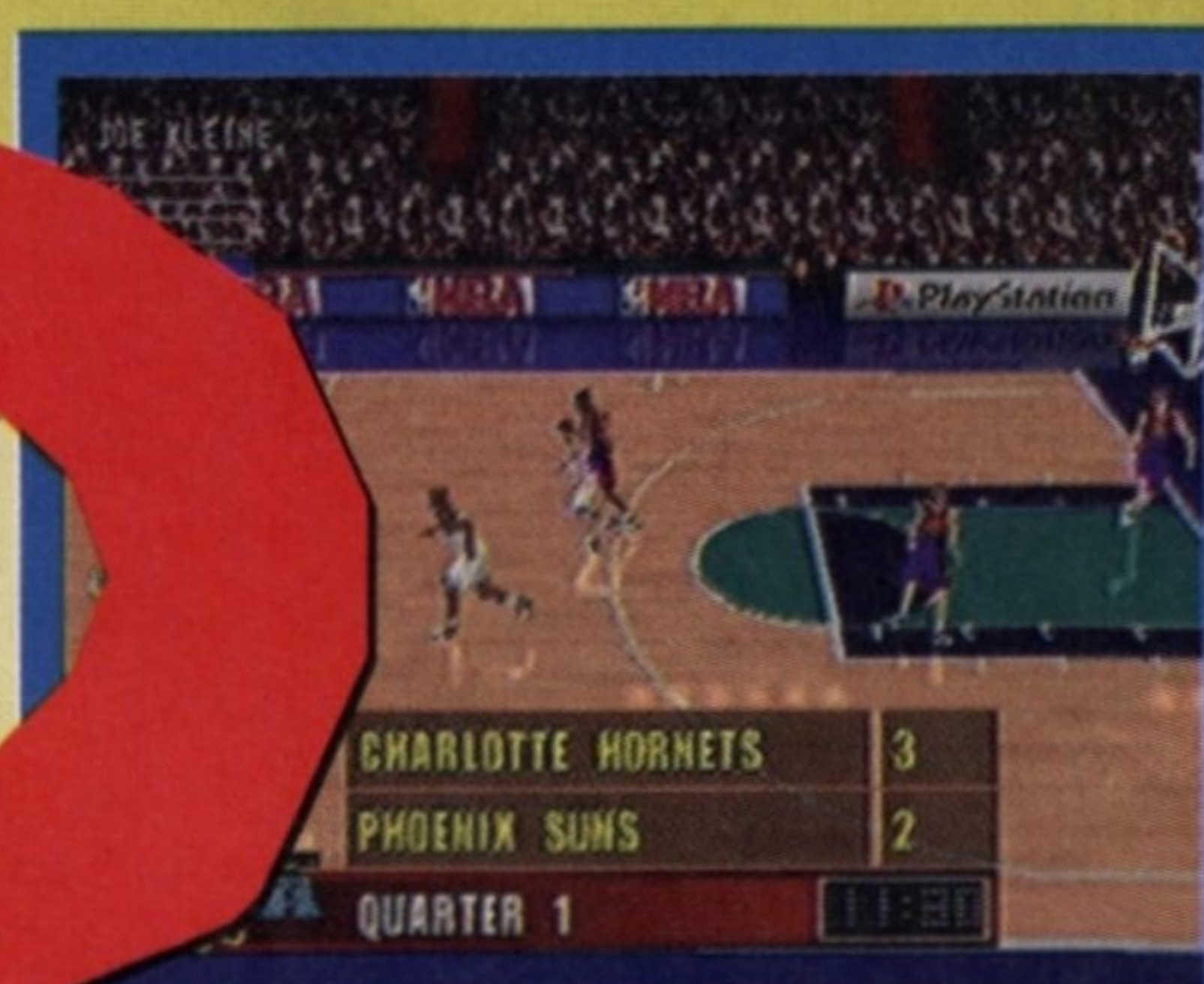
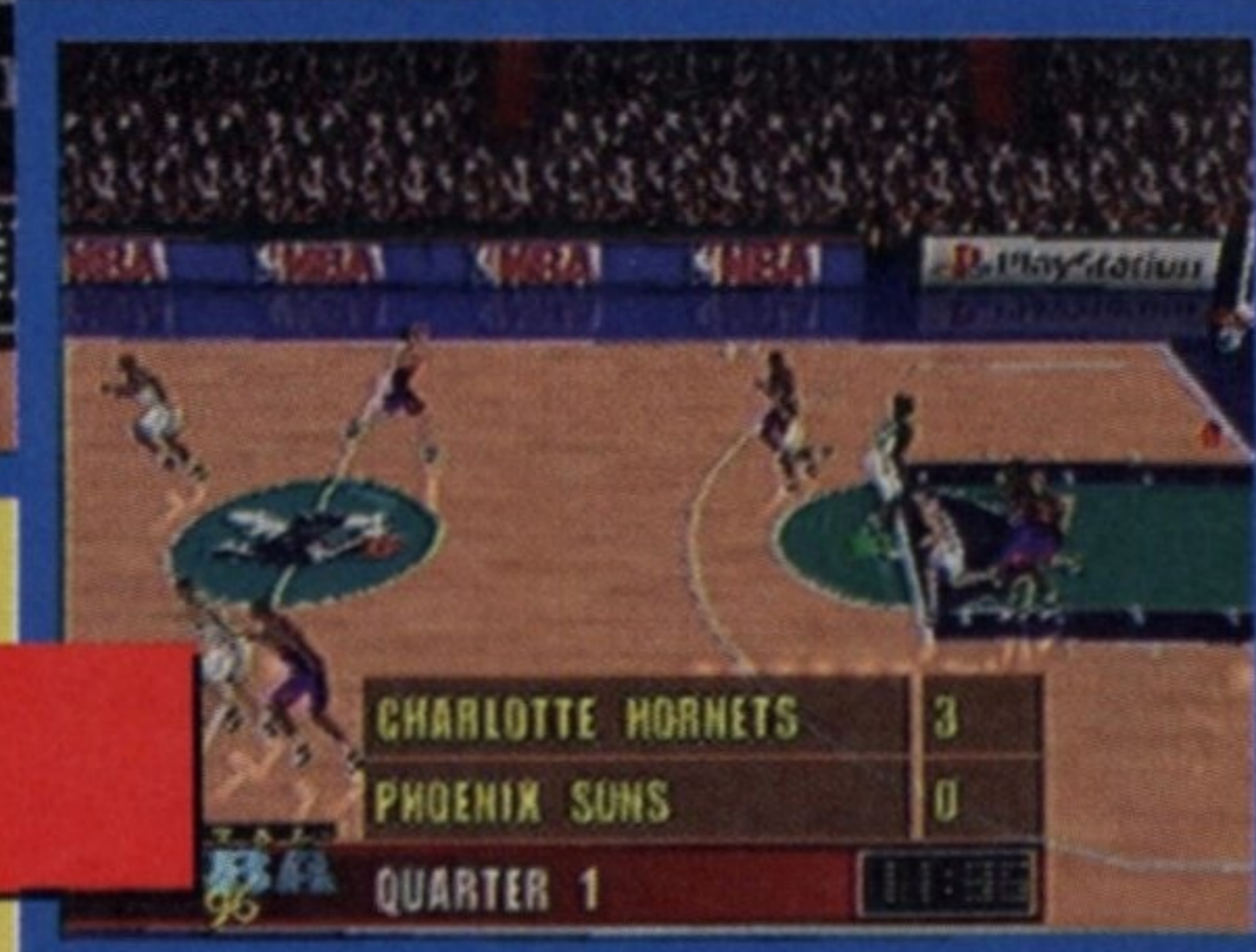
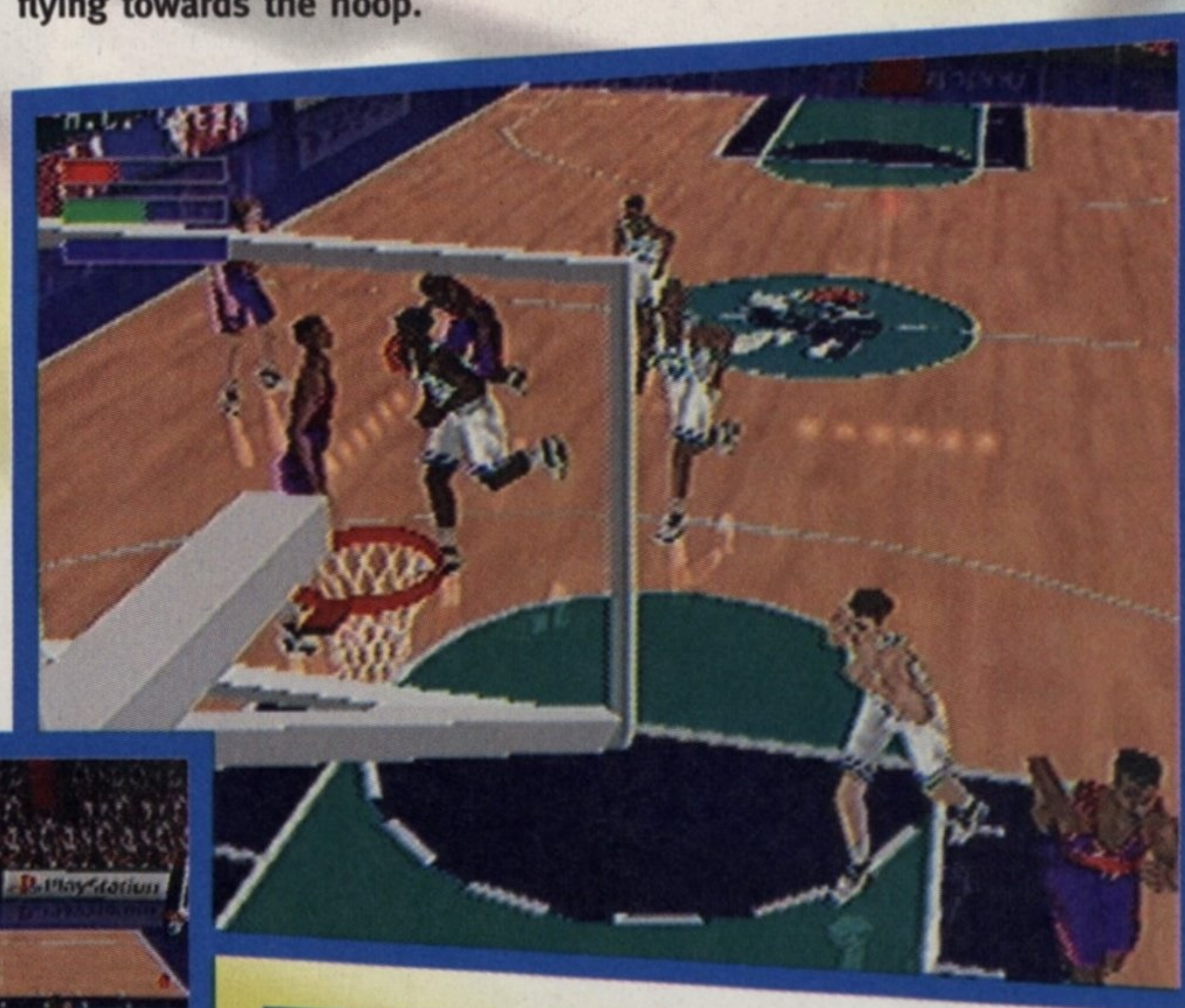
PlayStation is capable of and help other developers strive to make games better and better."

A lofty ambition. So how does it translate into practice. What's exactly involved with *Total NBA*? Well, the game started off after a successful pitch to the US basketball governing body, the NBA, for the official licence back in January. Serious

much more realistic than *NBA Jam*

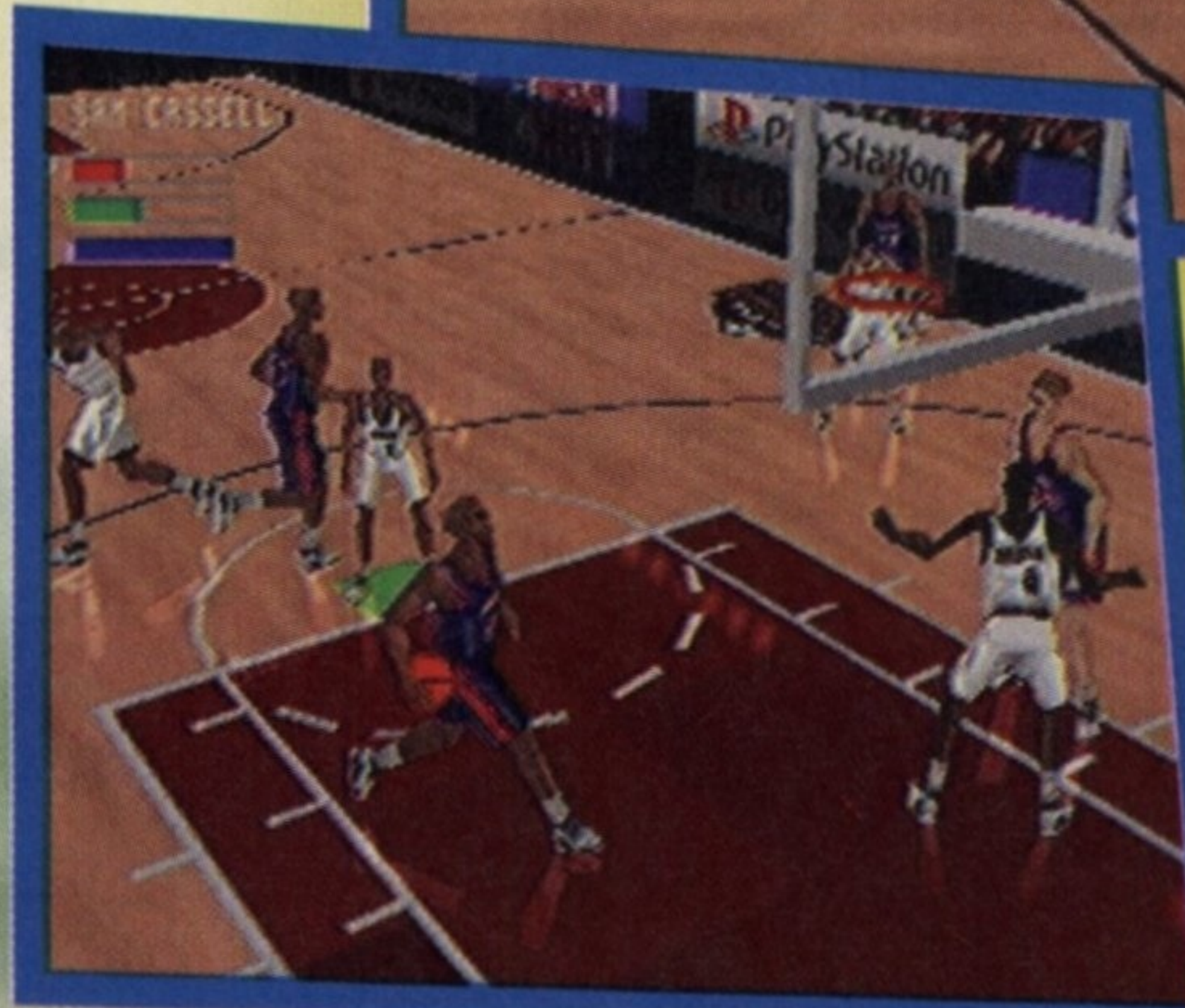


▼ Down on the court you can view up close from behind the board. Which is great when you're viewing your shots flying towards the hoop.



▲ The Hornets pack the three second zone as the Suns attempt a flying pass through the middle. Looks like it's going out though.

◀ But Mourning's got free, he's going in for a slam, and all the Suns can do is stand and watch, oh dear.



96

development work started the month after, complete with the soon to be infamous motion capture technology (believe me, you are going to be reading an awful lot about motion-captured games over the next few months) and the resident basketball consultant, Patrick Kinnucane.

"When we started off, we wanted to make the gameplay much more realistic, than say, *NBA Jam* and, secondly, to make the best use of the PlayStation's 3D capabilities, although to be honest, this only particularly comes to the fore in the replay sections. For instance, you'll be able to set the camera anywhere you want and edit together your own replay, cutting from one viewpoint to another. The use of motion-capture though adds so much to the feel of the game, it really is a massive advantage over purely sprite-based games."

"Another thing we wanted to do was include every NBA player in the model so you'd be able to recognise all the players close up on the first person

perspective mode. Contract problems with individual players which I can't go into [But I can – Michael Jordan, Shaq O'Neal and Scottie Pippen – Ian] meant we couldn't include some, and time restraints meant we've ended up adopting a police identikit-style approach. Which, in the end, I think works really well.

"So, what you actually see in first person perspective mode is the closest of 144 different player figures to the face of the relevant NBA star. We've also included almost perfect representations of some of the bigger stars, like Dennis Rodman [He of the infamous multi-coloured hairstyle]."

Running at 30 frames a second (which is quickish, for those who bought a PlayStation because it was easier to use than a PC, rather than because of all the tech specs they

Slamming...

Slow motion action replay showing just how smooth the best of the basketball bunch can be. A nifty change of hands, keeping the opposition well behind him. He jumps, he shoots and it's in the basket!

1



2



3



4



5

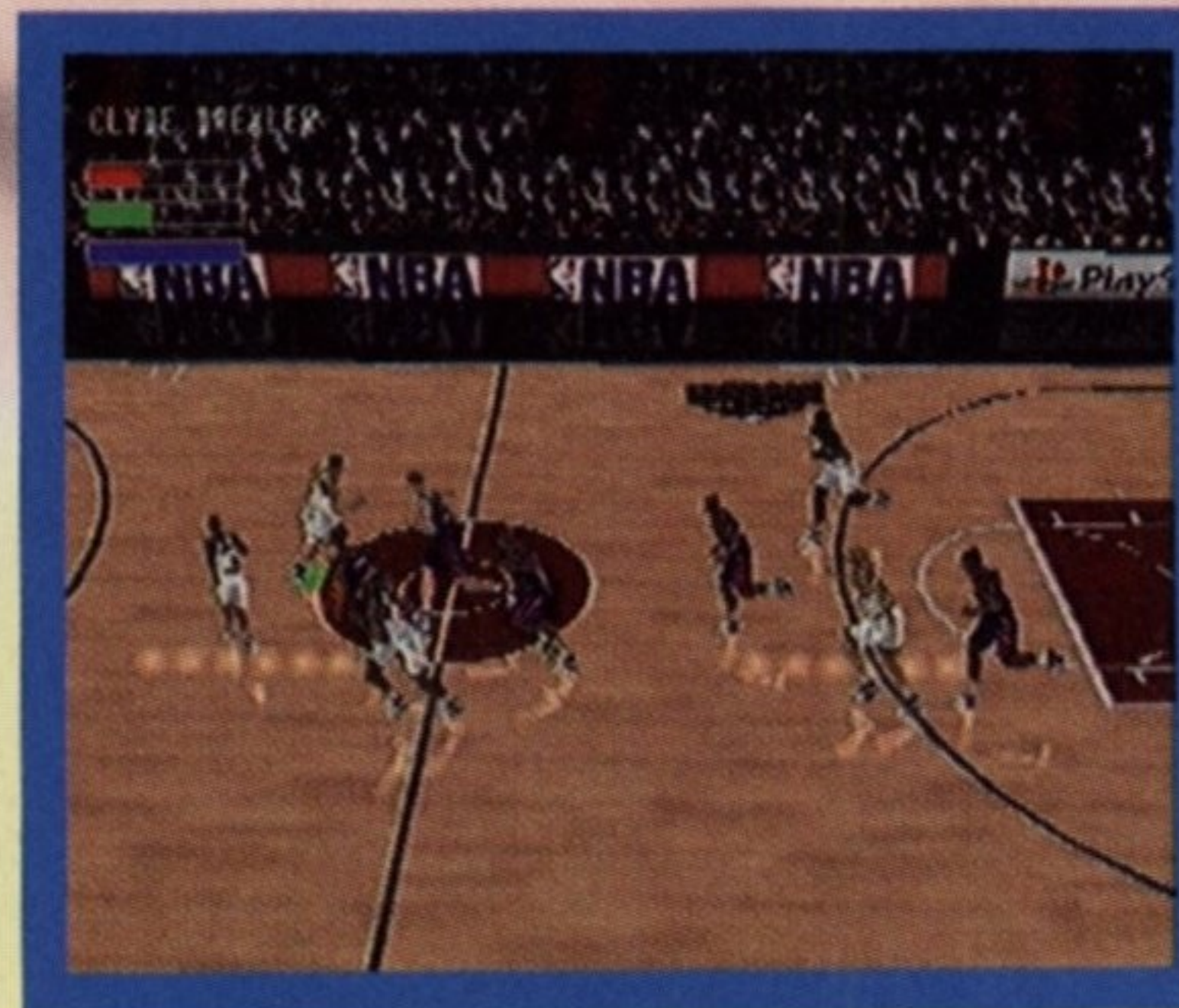


read in *Edge*), *Total NBA* also features every NBA stadium, all the team kits, has a bunch of defensive and offensive strategies particular to each team (accessed via the top buttons), a season mode, custom teams, an eight-player option and three different visual stats for each player which actively effects his performance. The latter is represented by three coloured bars showing two-point shooting, three-point shooting and stamina.

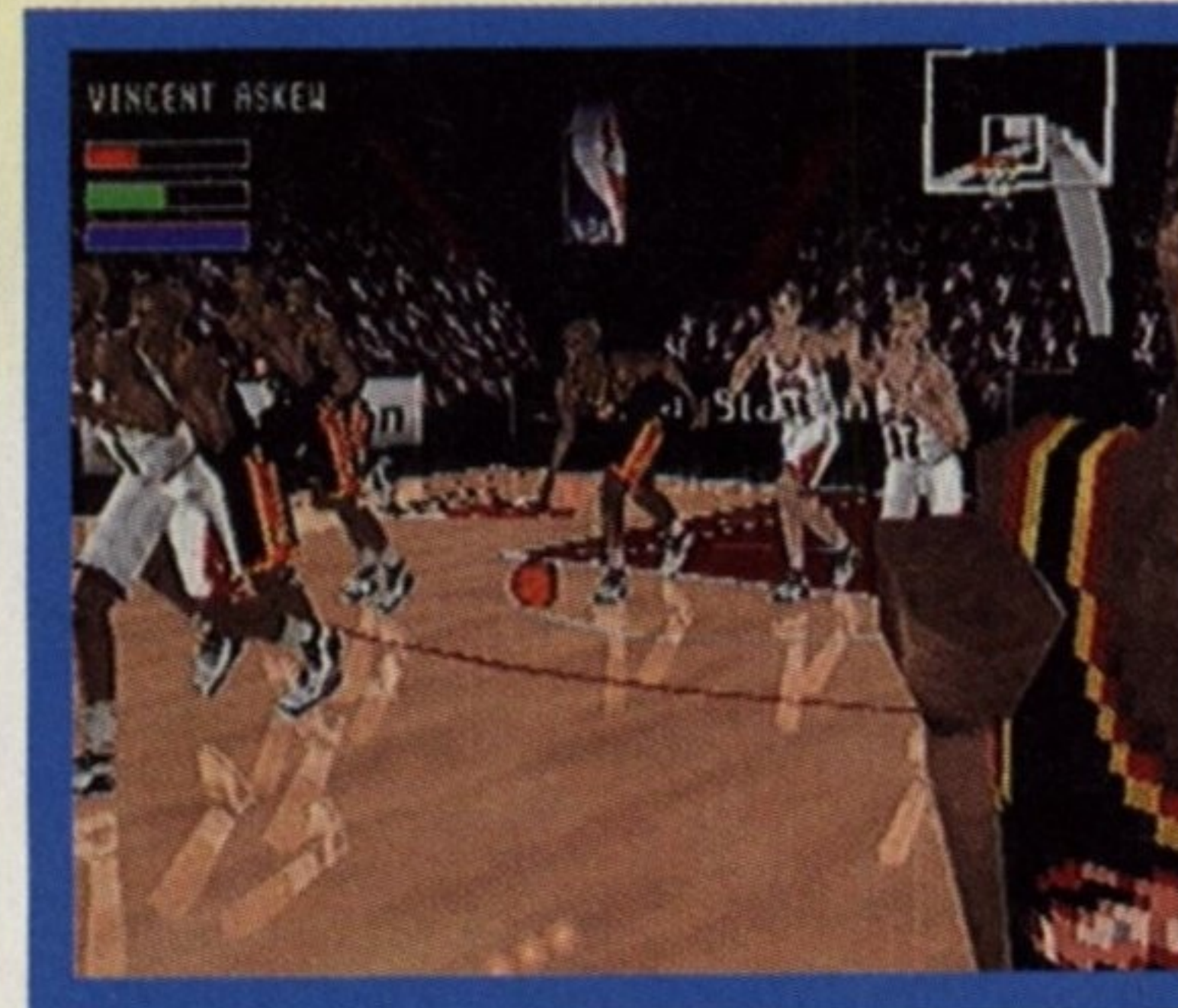
The control system is also shaping up nicely, with two key buttons accounting for simple manoeuvres (pass, jump shot, steal, block) and other buttons used for trickier moves (near-basket feeds, dunks, hook shots, behind the back passes, alley oops and activating strategies). Along with the basic attributes, each player also has a dunk percentage drawn from 'real-life' play. The better this is, the more spectacular the dunks he can pull off. Don't, however, expect *NBA Jam*-style gravity-defying leaps – this is a realistic game remember!

Being an official NBA licence has undoubtedly good elements, but there is a slight downside. For instance, fighting is right out, backboard-breaking dunks banned, taunting has gone west and hanging on rims *shouldn't* be in the final version (but you never know, eh?).

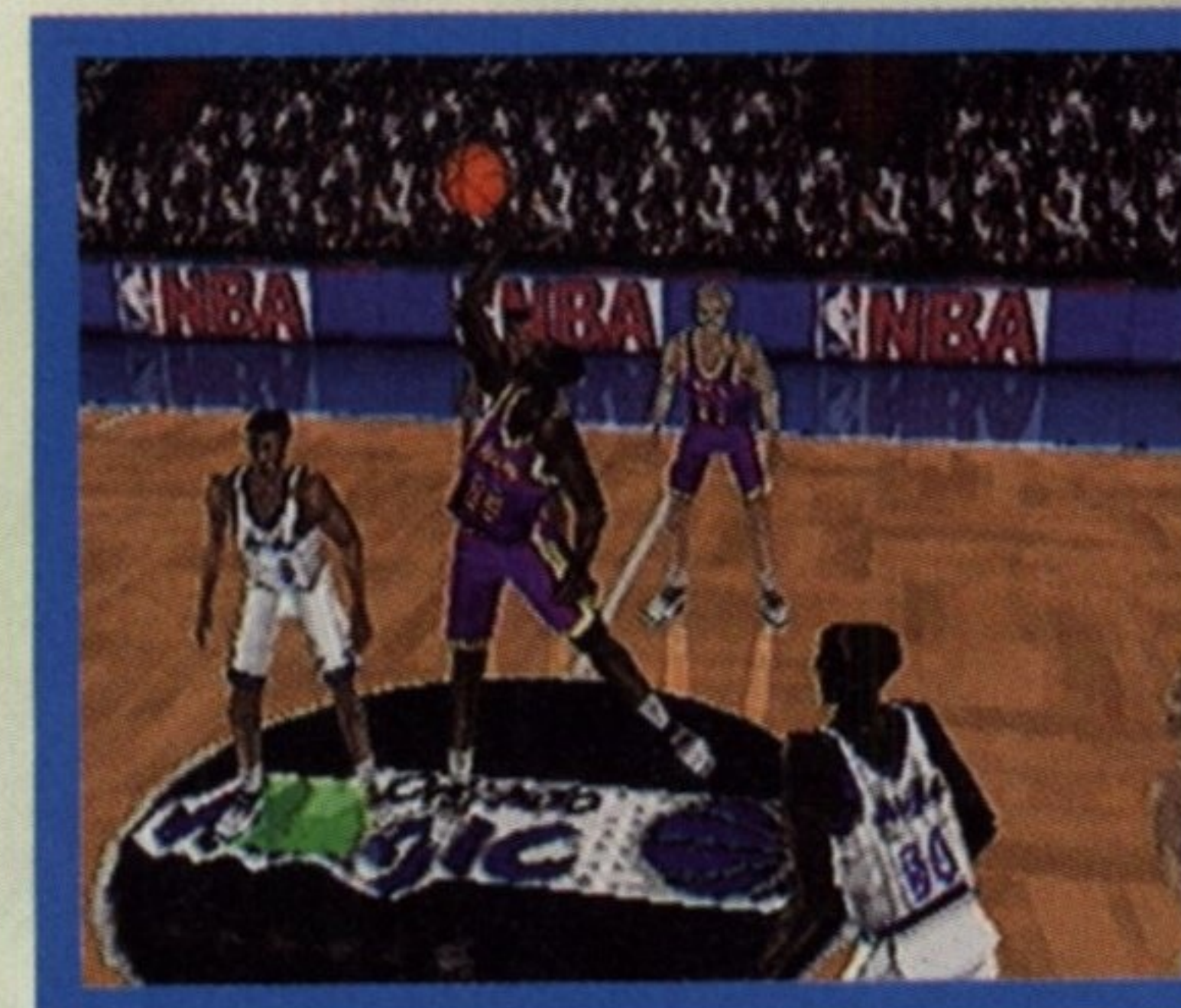
For the moment, from whichever of the eight or nine views scheduled to make the final cut you look at it from, *Total NBA* appears like being a class act. Playing a 65% complete version, it seemed intuitive, sufficiently difficult to make it challenging but still responsive. Roll on our Christmas issue and the full review.



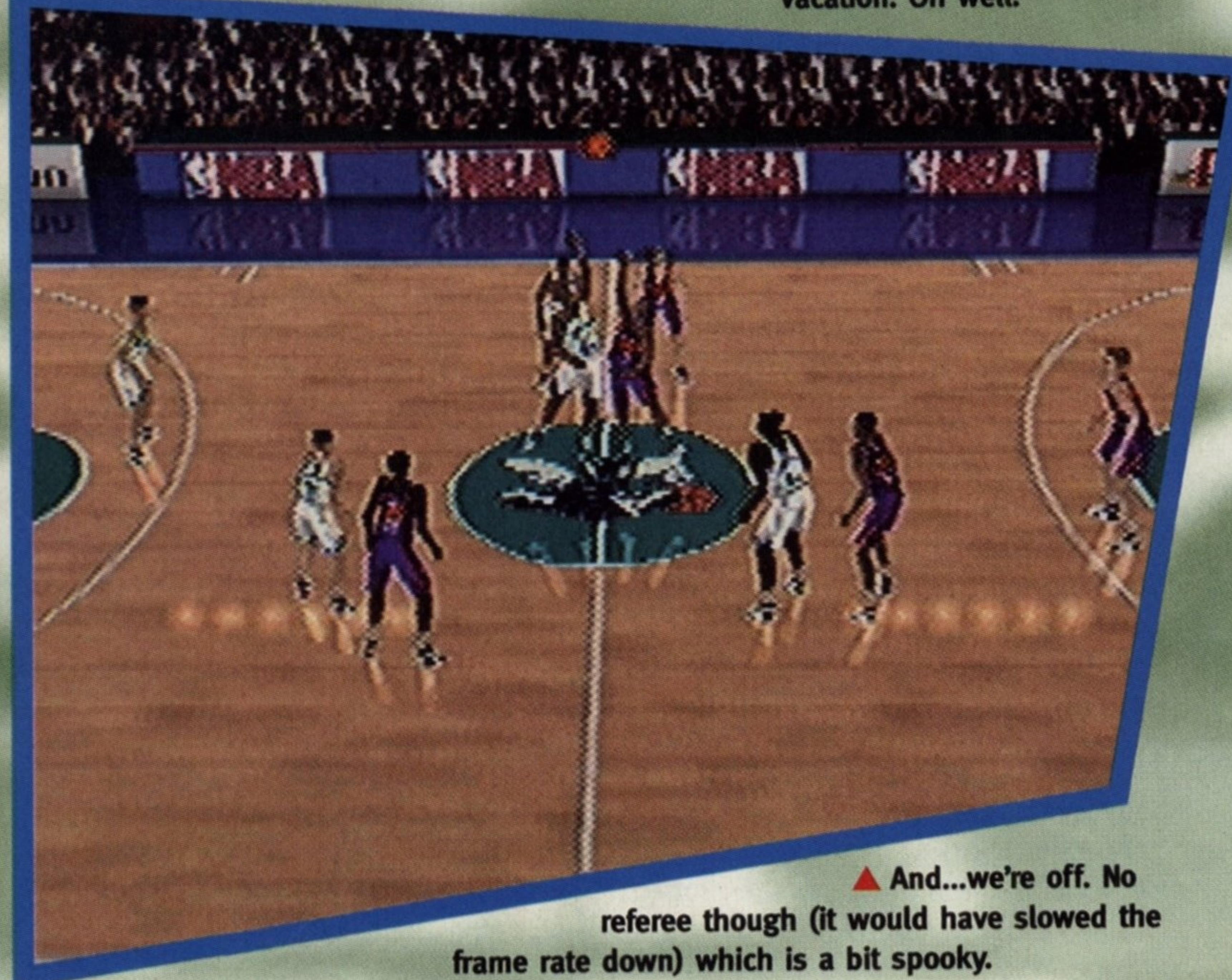
▲ If you're well into planning set plays, and using all the court, then this is the view for you. I prefer action myself.



▲ If you're wondering, the red bar shows 3 point chance, the green 2 point chance and the blue stamina.



▲ We're at the home of the Orlando Magic but Shaq O'Neal seems to be on vacation. Oh well.



▲ And...we're off. No referee though (it would have slowed the frame rate down) which is a bit spooky.



◀ He shoots, but does he score? The Suns are jumping frantically to try and block the shot. Shoot and block, use the same key y'know.

▼ He's bald, he's bad, he's about to jam the hoop, and if you look closely, you'll see he's got this tongue out. Cool!

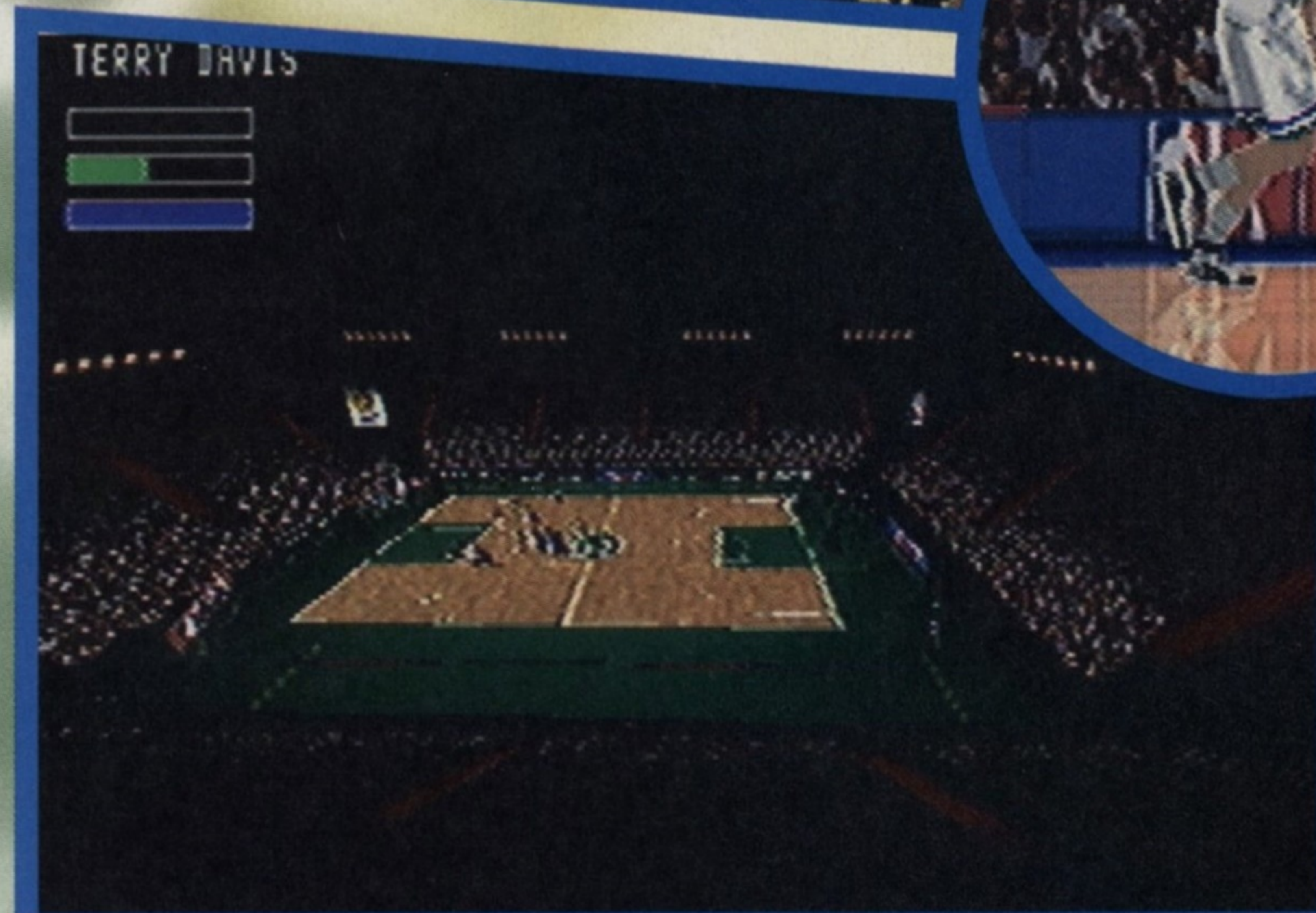


▲ He's behind you! And in front of you, and where's everybody else gone anyway?

▼ I wouldn't like to be the cameraman taking this shot. Imagine, one hand holding onto the roof, the other on the camera.



◀ This motion-capture stuff really works y'know. The animated players are well fluid.



▲ The fan's eye view. Well, that of fans either too cheap to get good tickets or not important enough to be given freebies. Can't see much of the action from here, but apparently Terry Davis has got it, and he can't shoot to save his life.

Credits:

Jules Burt – Producer/Senior Software Engineer
 Richard Lee – Soft. Eng. (3D display animation)
 Mark Green – Soft. Eng. (artificial intelligence)
 Paul Nath – Soft. Eng. (ball dynamics and cameras)
 James Millson – Graphic Artist (kit and overall design)
 Nikki Bridgman – Graphic Artist (court modelling)
 Paul Mulliner – Graphic Artist (motion capture)
 Patrick Kinnucane – Basketball Consultant.

Asam Ahmad, or Caveman or KV to his friends, electronically toddles over to France to discuss *Fade to Black* with innovative design team Delphine. Already a smash on PC, it's now looking pretty awesome on the more powerful PlayStation...

► You can either be a hero, or, er, what's this? A computer centre. Maybe I can radio for help. I know, I know, I'm a coward, but I value my life...



Fade

F

irst, some background.

Delphine's *Flashback*, appeared on our screens several years ago.

The game was widely acclaimed by the computer press, not just for being avant-garde in terms of graphics, sound and intercut animations, but more due to the actual gameplay. And that doesn't happen very often, believe me.

Flashback combined elements of platform action and adventure superbly, producing an immensely playable game.

Unfortunately the PlayStation wasn't around when *Flashback* was created, but we are lucky enough to catch the sequel, *Fade to Black*. It promises to take off where *Flashback* left off, not just in story, but also in depth of play. Excited? You should be. *Fade to Black* is very probably going to be awesome.

In keeping with the *Flashback* theme, *Fade to Black* features Conrad B. Hart as the main character. The action takes place in 2190 AD. The solar system is under the control of a malevolent race of aliens called the Morphs. They are weird



PLAY+
information

- Design team: Delphine
- Team leader: Paul Cuisset
- Where at: 85% complete
- Target release: March '96
- Publisher: Electronic Arts



▲ This meanie looks like something from *Arachnophobia*. Kill it quick or it will destroy you and thwart all your plans of escape.



▲ Over your shoulder Conrad! Isn't that a meanie from *Star Wars*? He's gonna get you...



◀ A cunningly placed photocopier? Now how do you work this darn thing?

to e Black

creatures that have a metabolic system which enables them to imitate or replicate any shape. They are remote-controlled by auxiliary-brains, who are themselves controlled by master-brains.

You play the role of Conrad B. Hart (you've said that already, you've said that already – Repetition ed) a young student on his way to Earth in cryogenic sleep. Captured by the Morphs, Conrad is awoken and imprisoned on the moon. A human rebel faction bent on overthrowing the aliens assists in Conrad's escape and persuades him to join their rebellion. Your mission, is to eliminate these monstrous master-brains who live deep in the heart of the colonized planets. Anyway, enough of the plotline already.

Paul Cuisset, the original creator of *Flashback* and a designer to be reckoned with, is the head programmer for *Fade*

**a perfect
mix of
action,
strategy
and reality**

to *Black*. One of the hallmarks of *Flashback* was its perfect mix of action, strategy, and reality. "*Fade to Black* is a deep adventure game with a lot of action and emotion," says Paul. "The mix seems to work well. I mean that when you play it, you don't get the feeling that it is just

a demonstration of the technology. I absolutely wanted to avoid that. You will love people, such as Sarah, and hate people – I won't tell you who, and will want to help people that need help later. You're free to do what you want, but you'll find the right way. I mean that you're free to kill your friends but it won't take you very far if you do that. You'll have

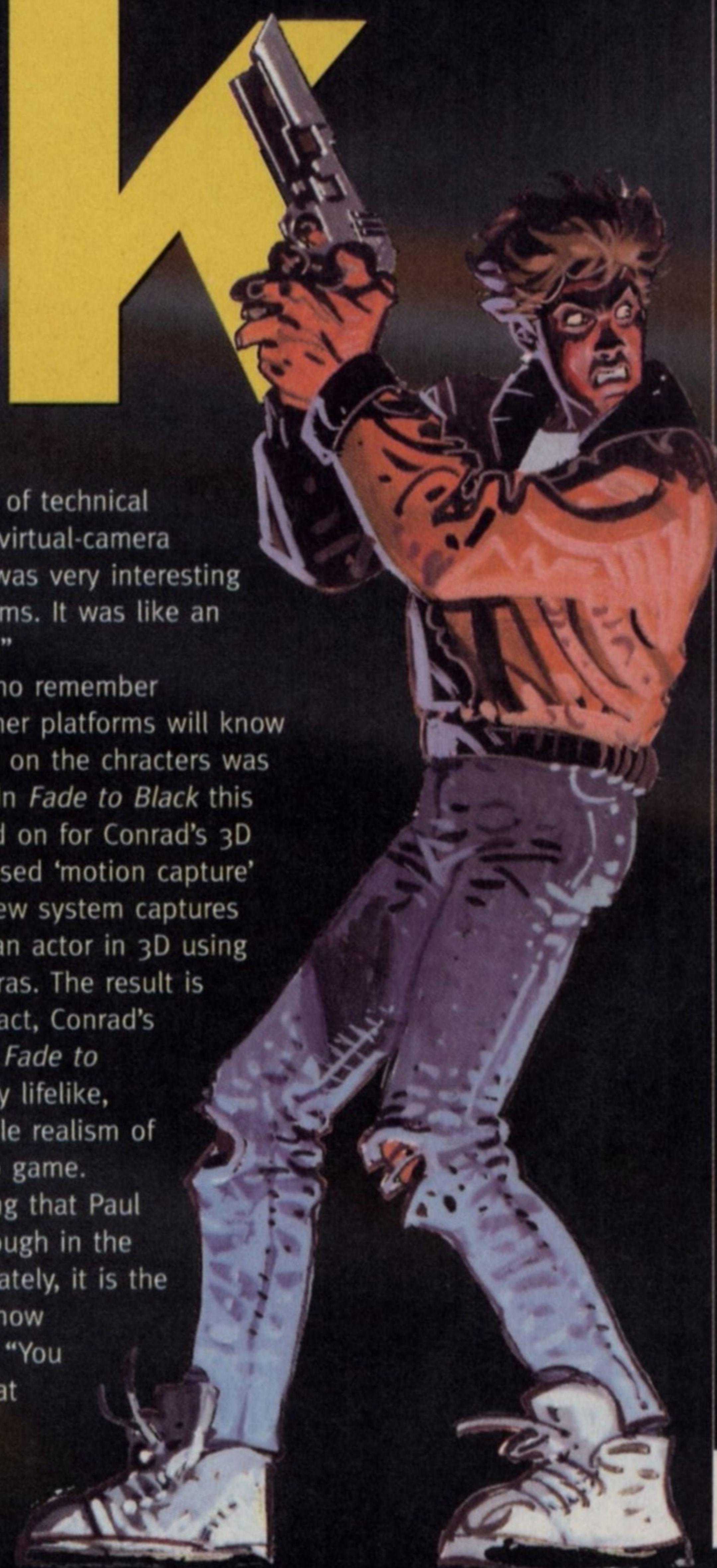
to decide your own actions and their consequences just like in real life."

Creating a game like this is no easy task. According to Paul, there were many obstacles. "I don't want to bore you with technical stuff..." (Thanks Paul – We're not *Edge* ed). "...But very simply, realtime 3D was never used this way. Due to this,

we have had a lot of technical problems such as virtual-camera placement. But it was very interesting to fix these problems. It was like an adventure in itself."

Those of you who remember *Flashback* from other platforms will know that the animation on the characters was extremely lifelike. In *Fade to Black* this has been improved on for Conrad's 3D world. "We have used 'motion capture' technology. This new system captures the movement of an actor in 3D using four infrared cameras. The result is very realistic." In fact, Conrad's movements in the *Fade to Black* are incredibly lifelike, adding to the whole realism of the already superb game.

But another thing that Paul wanted to get through in the game is that ultimately, it is the player's choice in how the game unfolds. "You can do exactly what you want, go where you want to go, you can even kill your





▲ Grizzly Adam's bear has taken up an alternative vocation and can be seen sporting a nasty gun in *Fade to Black*.

friends if it pleases you – you will regret it of course. Of course the story line is there, you have missions to accomplish in a certain order, however you have complete freedom in what you do. Playability is what we have in mind before absolutely everything else.”

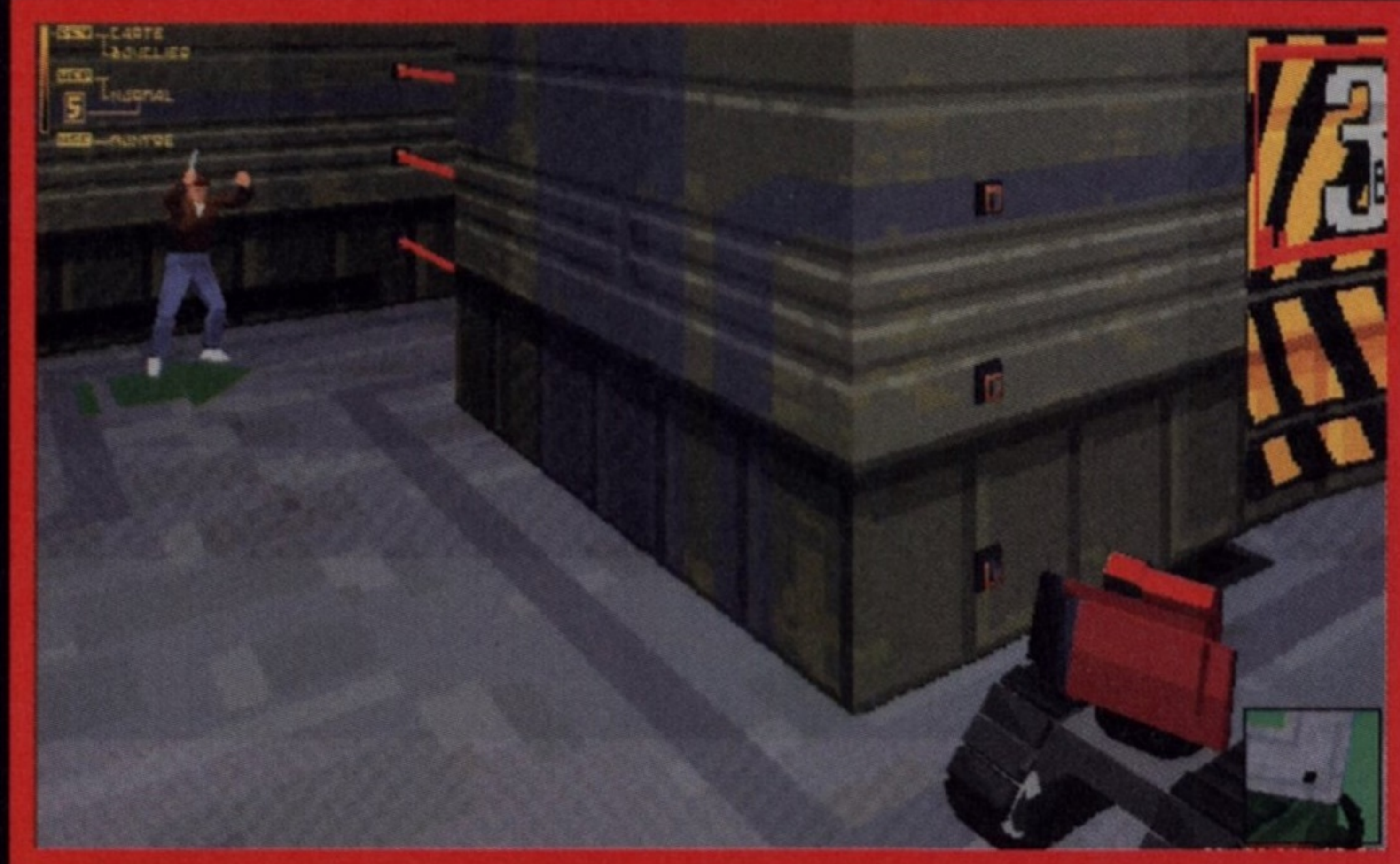
Paul's attention to detail is amazing. (O! we're not supposed to be reviewing this! Calm down, and play it straight KV – Objectivity ed) *Fade to Black* has undergone months of playtesting. Three months ago, *Fade to Black* was almost complete. However, one of the problems with the game was the virtual-camera system. “Our playability testers had the feeling that the camera system was a little bit disturbing at some points of the game. We had to then modify

this camera system to make it more comfortable for the players. We really want people to enjoy playing our games.” To this end, *Fade to Black* now has one of the most intelligent camera systems of any game available.

Another of Paul's concerns is realism. Paul believes that a game should be logical and intuitive. Everything you do in *Fade to Black* happens as you'd expect it to. “We have tried to stick to reality. I mean if you kill an enemy, he won't reappear. If you shoot a dome made of glass, you'll be sucked out through the hole you've made. It is quite detailed and realistic.” More than this, simple touches like sound effects that accurately represent source location through stereo positioning, and how all the graphics are extremely well light-sourced, make this game incredibly immersive (are they paying you, or what? – Sarcasm ed) (shut up, I saw it, you didn't, and it's brilliant – KV).

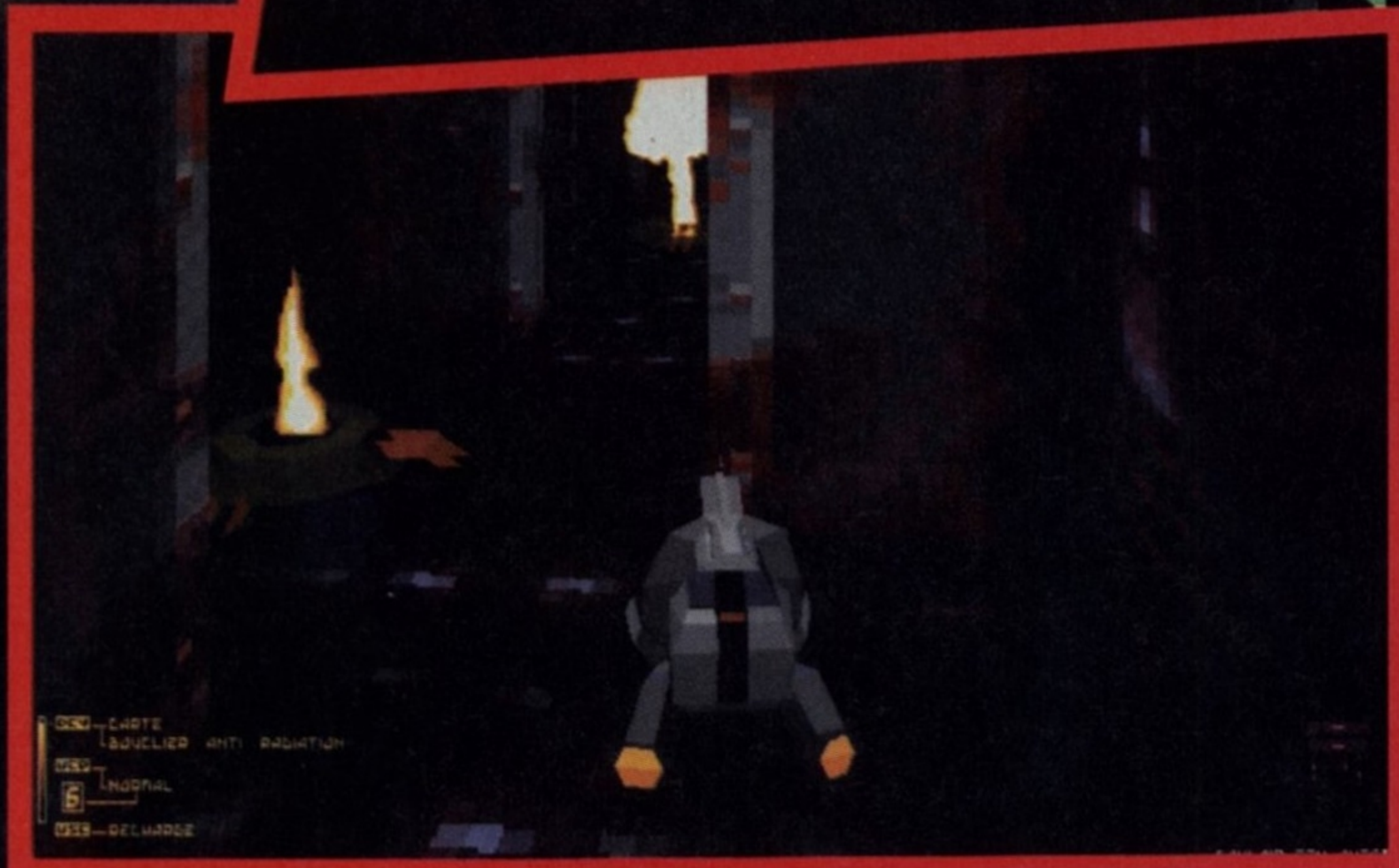
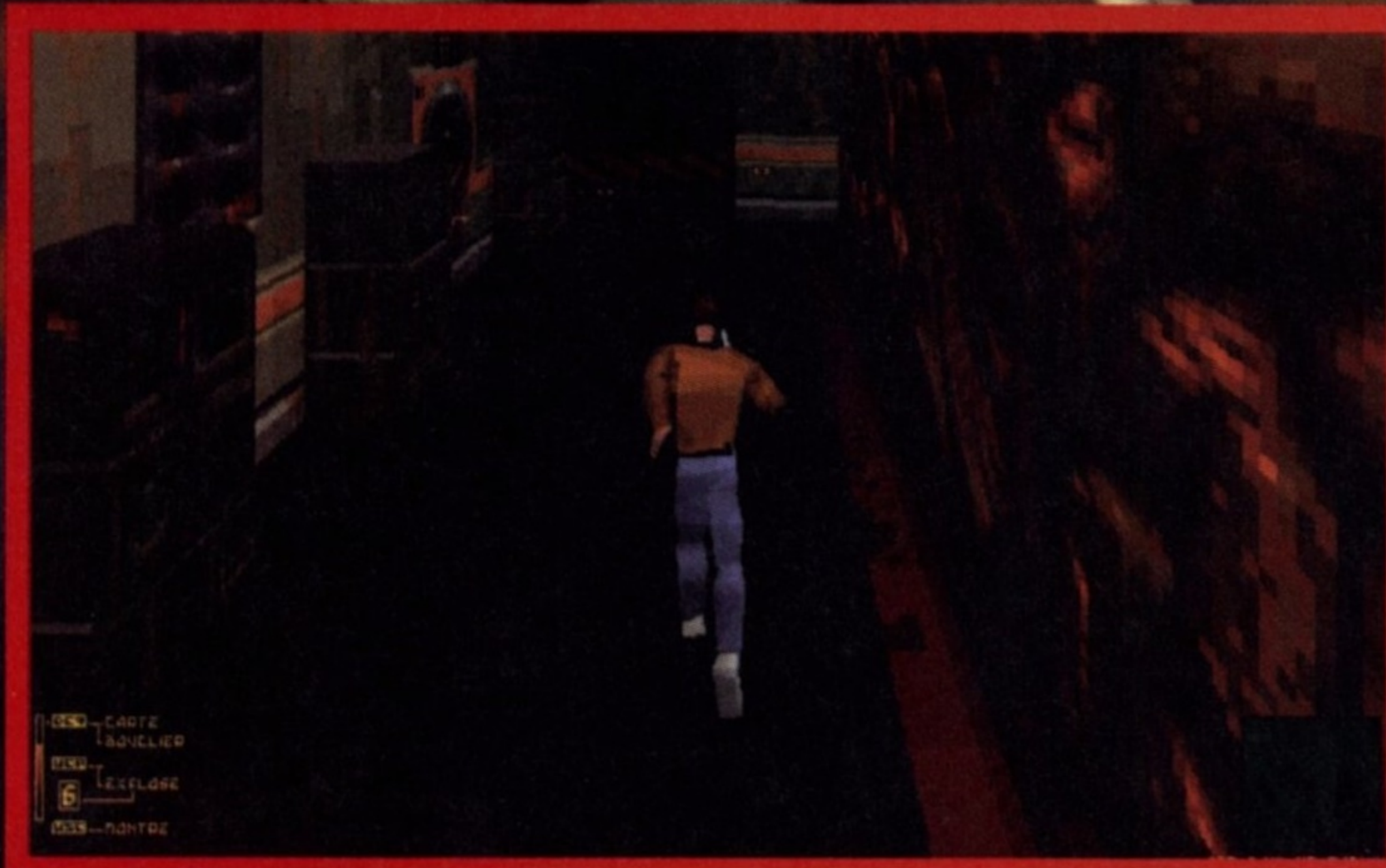
Fade to Black, has so far spent over two and a half years in development. Paul Cuisset and his team are feverishly working to bring

► Are you my friend or a morphy thing disguised as a bloke?



out the PlayStation version as soon as possible. “It has been quite hard. We have had a lot of technical problems, especially due to memory restrictions. But the game has turned out almost exactly as I wanted it to look like and play like.” They hope to have the development complete by mid-January and are aiming for a March release.

The future? “PlayStation is my favourite machine. All the games that I am going to develop in the next few years will be developed with the PlayStation in mind.” This is particularly good news for the PlayStation. Indeed, Paul has already started work on his next game, and going by the strength of his previous work, we should have something very special on the horizon. Stay with *Play...* we'll keep you informed.





◀ Runaway! Runaway! I'd rather be in bed to be quite honest. The ground is turning to lava, there is a nasty horned creature chasing me. Bit of a nightmare really.



▲ My gun's bigger than your gun. Er, no, your gun's bigger than mine. Boo. No fair! Take that! Aaaaaaaaarrrrgggghhh...





◀ I've heard of games plumbing the depths before, but this is ridiculous! Still, you never know, I might just find some kind of useful clue down here.

ALLEGIANCE



◀ She's a babe! No, she's a secret agent! Well, she's Kay Brogan, and she's the heroine of this little tale. Nice pair of er, shades, you got there Kay.

Allegiance

Blood, sweat and beers. Ian Lynch travels into the twisted world of espionage that is Team 17's *Allegiance*: a game where you can never be quite sure just who the enemy is...

When is a film-licence not a film-licence? When the design team involved writes the film themselves, and then turns it into a game. Confused? I'll explain...

For a start, game concept man Ramo (I kid you not) talks about *Allegiance* as a plotline rather than a game. The idea, you see, is to create a secret agent type world of conspiracy and counter conspiracy for the gamer to wander around in, solving various missions as best he can. It's all set in a sort of much darker, grittier representation of the kind of universe James Bond usually finds himself in. It also looks like it'll play a little like a first-person perspective adventure, the kind of thing that's kept cropping up ever since *Doom* arrived

on the PC. Although they'll probably get upset I even mentioned *Doom*, but there you go.

You play Kay Brogan, a sharp looking operative recruited by a government agency on the edges of the military (or, in other words, something very, very like the CIA) to try and crack a dangerous terrorist-run drug cartel.

It's a mission-based game, currently set in six scenarios (hotel, big airport, military base, big mansion, small airport, train depot) with a planned 15-20 levels. This variety of settings looks like making a welcome change from *Doom*-style backgrounds, which are essentially the same arena multiplied to the nth degree. Despite my occasional use of *Doom* as a reference point (apologies to the few gamers in the world who don't

what *Doom* is, it's out on PlayStation next month – buy it and find out), *Allegiance* really isn't, however, the same kind of strategic 'walk round shooting everything possible that moves' game.

It's pitched as something more cerebral, that really does require a little lateral thinking to solve the problems thrown at you. Note: that's logical problem-solving, and not ye olde adventure-style puzzle solving.

It's too early to say whether the team looks like pulling this off, but it's certainly a worthwhile gaming goal to work towards producing.

Bearing in mind the secret agent marlarkey, each mission broadly represents the testing of a different attribute required to survive in the world of espionage. So, as well as the gratuitous violence levels, which, I'm sure you'll be glad to know (as I was) will be in there, it also has missions where stealth is vital, and blowing someone away is positively a bad idea if you need to find those important clues.

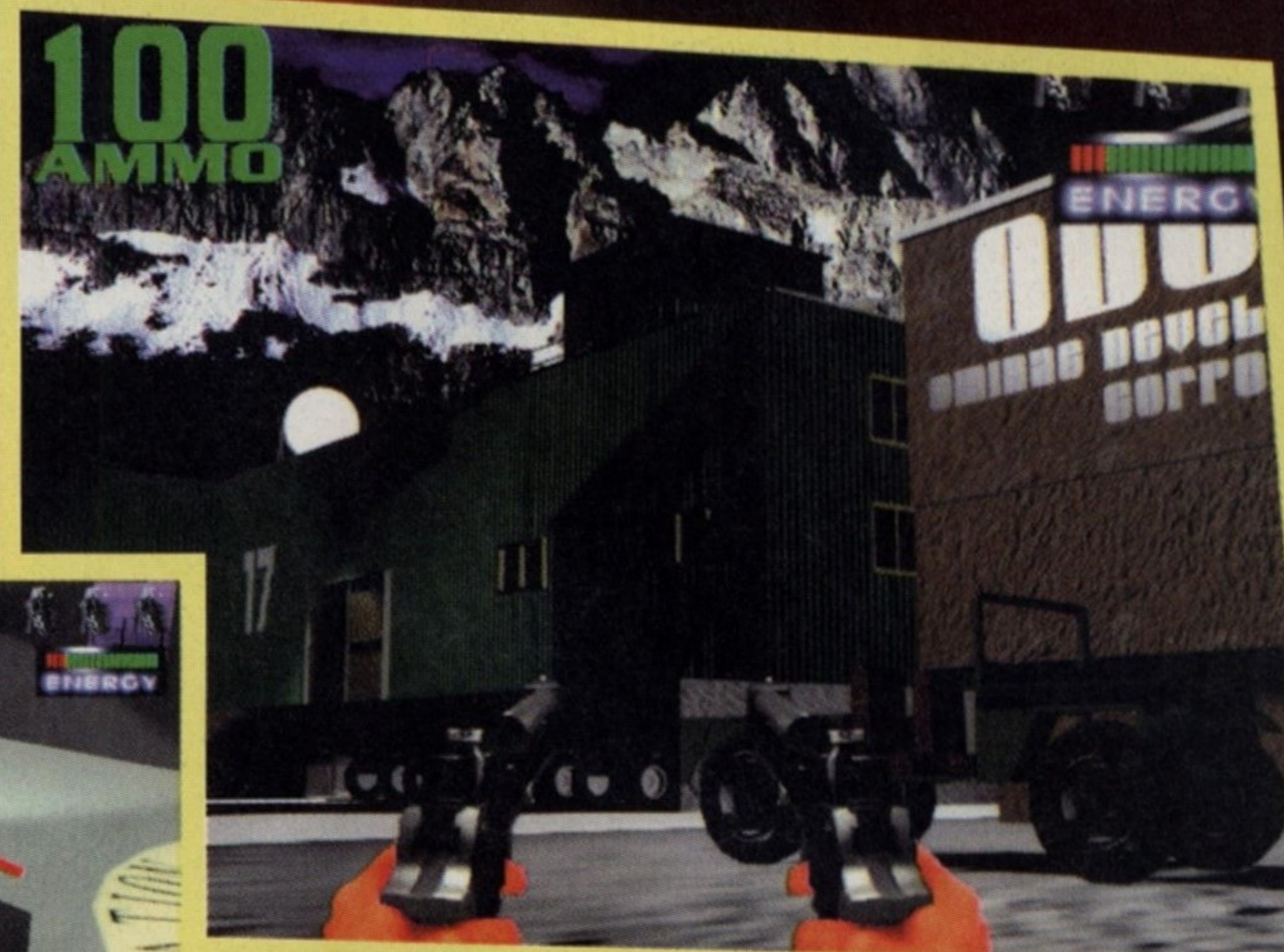
survive
in
the
world
of
espionage

PLAY information

- Design team: Team 17
- Team Leader: Ramo
- Where at: 60% complete
- Target release: March '96
- Publisher: Team 17/Ocean



▼ One of the six settings is a military compound. Being a Team 17 game, of course, it's camp 17 which you've got to infiltrate. I dunno, developers eh?



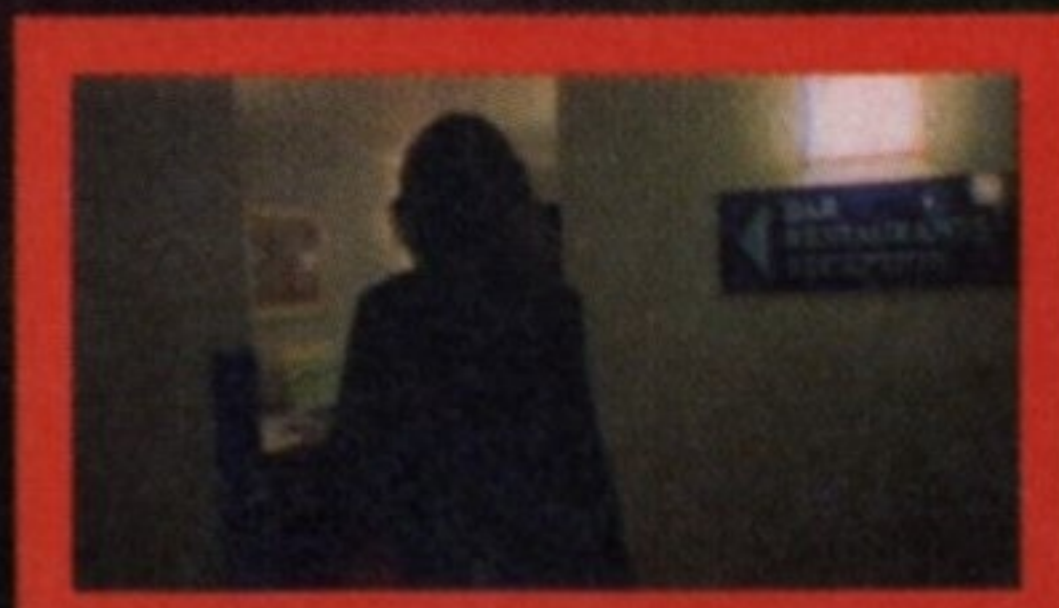
▲ Honestly, some missions do require stealth – but it's always good to have a couple of automatics at the ready. Stealth, stealth, stealth. better take my shoes off, hey. wouldn't want to mess up that nice shiny clean floor now, would I?



▲ You know, I could swear this was identical to the Team 17 offices. Actually, a lot of the filming of the FMV scenes used the office as a set. Cheaper that way!

ance

Full Metal Video...



Hi, Kay's the name, Kay Brogan, investigator. It'd been a long, hard day on the Calvetti case, the guy's a bum but it pays the bills, and my feet were barking like dogs. I needed a stiff one, something long, dark and cool to wrap my lips around. This place looked like somewhere a girl could relax, so I followed the sign.



Wait a moment. The pair of jokers on the door looked like they'd seen some action. There was something not quite right, they either had something wrong with their eyes or I'd put on too short a skirt taht morning. Or maybe Calvetti was into something big, and I was being set up. Y'know, I never did like that guy.



This was no time to take chances. I decided to get tooled up. I walked past the door and searched for the necessary, there at long last, with the fluffy bits at the bottom of my handbag, was the purple, prune flavoured lip gloss Auntie Caroline gave me as a present last Christmas. Now I was ready for anything, I went for my gun.



Bang, the guy's tie leapt to attention, but I definitely had no time for that now. He was going down and his friend was getting uglier by the second. And he was second best to begin with. Hey, it was a little extreme but a girl can't take chances in this town, and I really wanted that drink...PMT hits you hard sometimes!



This time I was taking no chances, they might have bacardi in there and there was no way I was going to mess with him again without a shield. The second guy had got so ugly he turned to stone. Calvetti was going to have to put up big bread (even a loaf) if I was going to stay on this darned complex case.

As well as escort tasks, assassination trips, laying explosives and search and destroy attacks, and all at a more than useful 25 frames a second.

You also get to torture, sorry, interrogate people as you go. The interrogation element, the violence, the pain, the graphic sheer blatant, put-in-there-for-the-hell-of-it blood splattered imagery is also reflected by one of the most striking aspects of *Allegiance* – the use of FMV (Full Motion Video). No, come back! I swear it's relevant to the gameplay and everything! And it's really quite smart, honest! Yes, FMV clips in games have always been complete bollocks to date, with the possible exception of EA's \$4,000,000 budget *Wing Commander III*, and *7th Guest* but this actually looks quite good. Seriously!

What they've done is to shoot sequences, and pretty censor-crinking sequences at that, to act as both mission briefs, plot hints (do watch closely, information is given away that might help you make the thought jump necessary

to twig a rather neat plot twist) a mood-setting intro and in-game cut scenes that fade back to a different location than the one you started in.

The guy responsible is ex-film special effects man John Allardice. John has put together a nine and a half minute

intro, which unless you're a film buff and know the difference, you'll think bears more than a passing resemblance to a Quentin Tarantino short. Blood-like substances abound. It's also been shot on film, (most FMV stuff is done on video, which is cheaper, but not as good quality).

I almost feel confident enough to say that *Allegiance*, four months away from completion, could be very smart indeed. But that would be silly at this early stage, so I'll keep my enthusiasm to myself for now.

▲ Red is always ominous. No matter what the game, you come across something red, you know you're in trouble. So, forgive me if I stall a little.

▼ Hey, a little help! Now we're smoking, and we better smoke a bit quickly before that guy gets any rounds off at me.



...Full Metal Video



God, this guy had a big one, and it didn't look like he was after my telephone number either. I didn't like what he was doing with his hands and I'd only just met the man. What kind of a joint had I stumbled across? And would I get busted if I took it home to relax in the bath sometime later?



I wasn't taking chances. In fact, I'm the kinda girl that always take precautions. A spark of sulphur and I'd popped a couple a shells into his back, this one was stone alright, stone cold dead. Man, Calvetti didn't have the kinda dough to make me come back for more. Assuming I made it outta here. But there was still bacardi to deal with...



Damn, that was close. Luckily I had Medusa here to take the flak. But now I was getting upset. Blood had got on my micro-skirt, and someone was going to pay, 24-hour dry cleaners cost a fortune these days. Although I was now beginning to suspect it wouldn't be that rat Calvetti footing the final bill.



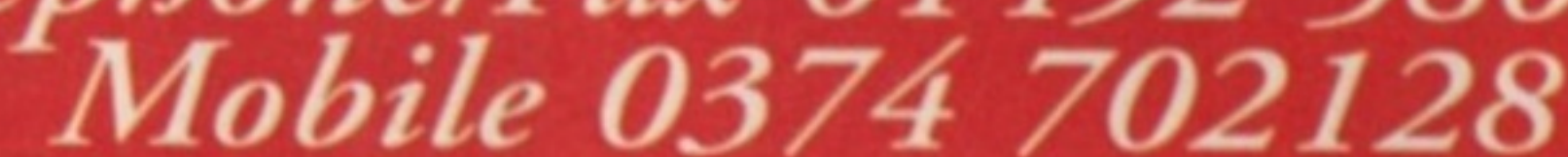
I popped the big guy, he wasn't pretty, but this didn't seem to be the kind of joint where you'd want to take someone home with you, so he was no big loss. Shame about the mess though, the apartment had potential – hey chicks notice that kinda thing. Then I heard movement, Jesus! where were they all coming from?



What was this place? Whoa, I knew that guy. It was Calvetti! The dirty snake had double crossed me. There was no way I was going to get paid now. He had to know. He had to pay. So I blew his brains out. Now all I had to do was track down bacardi, and I still hadn't had that darned drink. The End.

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Syndicate Wars



PLAY+ information

- Design team: Bullfrog
- Team leader: Mike Diskette
- Where at: 40% complete
- Target release: Early '96
- Publisher: Bullfrog Electronic

Non-games veterans won't know about the original *Syndicate*, about how violent people thought it was, or how good it was. Never mind, two years on and the sequel, *Syndicate Wars*, is well into its development. Agent Lynch donned his trenchcoat and went gunning for the truth.



◀ This Mike Man geezer, he's some artist isn't he? Although this does seem to have borrowed a little from the world of Manga. By the way, this is an agent.

Competition, there's nothing quite like it for getting the adrenaline flooding through the system. So, take one

Bullfrog game, give it a makeover and add in the competitive element and you should end up with something more appetising than anything Keith Floyd can concoct. Or, in this case, *Syndicate Wars*.

For those that don't know the story, *Syndicate* is one of the few games journos can genuinely say was, that much overused phrase, a classic. The main aim was to use your team of agents (working for the syndicate) to takeover the game world by fair means, or more commonly, foul. Among the weapons you could employ was something called the Persuadertron. This was, and still is I suppose, a rather nifty device which allows the user to take control of a chosen victim's mind. Simply, it was all about power. The having, manipulating and abuse of power. Bit like being a magazine editor really, eh Dave?

Now 40 per cent complete, *Syndicate Wars* is being designed to continue where *Syndicate* ended (assuming you won) with the player in glorious control of all territories. Then, before long, everything goes pear shaped, leaving you in a position traditionally described by the words 'up', 'creek', 'shit', 'without' and 'paddle', although not necessarily in that order. The rest of the game is all about the rather slow re-building of your own little empire.

The game world has moved on, and has got decidedly better looking too. It features a whole new group of technical bang upto date graphical improvements which make it look rather smart, as you can see for yourselves. Apparently something called lightsourcing is

S

involved, which basically means it has reflections and shadows in, which helps the game's atmosphere, and hey, that can only be a good thing. A good example of this is something as simple as street lights. Shoot them out, and everything else goes dark too.

The world has also moved on in that there are more types of teams to control. Being a corporate hitman might not necessarily appeal to everyone (always seemed a fine career choice to me) so Bullfrog have added in two other main playing characters, zealots and punks. Zealots are cult followers, religious maniacs with their own manifesto, whilst punks are just out to smash up any hierarchy they come across, banging the heads of rival gangs together as they go.

It's also bigger, the plan is for *Syndicate Wars* to actually have 25-30 cities in it, with the player controlling a team of four agents/punks or zealots in each one. Unlike the original, missions will not be directly related to a particular city, but will instead involve a more lateral approach, or as level designer Sean Masterton puts it, more "objective". For instance, a brief may be to acquire a new technology. This

could be done by a number of ways, kidnapping enough top-notch scientists to invent say, or perhaps stealing it, or perhaps buying it. This then involves deciding which city will have the right

characters
range
from the
paranoid
to the
psychotic

► All the best agents have big, fast cars with lots of gadgets on – so why should *Syndicate Wars* be any different?

components to make it a priority visit. If you're thinking this is getting a little complex, get this: you'll also have a number of missions on the go at once. Power

mad egomaniacs have to be good at multi-tasking you see.

This isn't, however, a strategy game. True, lead programmer Mike Diskette (which is one of the best apposite names

◀ You can zoom in and out, which is useful to see whether anything's coming up behind you.

▼ Up close, it doesn't look pretty. Those spidermobiles are vicious.



▲ Just in case you'd forgotten what game this was, here's a groovy looking grab of the logo. Smart huh?

Serious Firepower

The original *Syndicate* caused quite a fuss over the level of violence it supposedly contained. Any gamer worth his salt will be glad to know this hasn't been toned down. The level of weaponry for *Syndicate Wars* is really quite extraordinary. Here's the full SP on what the team is planning to include.

General

Unlike the original *Syndicate*, ammo is not restricted. Instead, all weapons run off energy, which can be re-charged at various energy consoles dotted around cities.

Uzi

Automatic gun

Minigun

Automatic heavy duty machine gun

Hand-2-Hand taser

Gives a huge electric shock at close range, and will work through shields.

Flamer

Flamethrower

Crazy gas

Can be used as a proximity mine, timed mine, or grenade. It sends people mad, but for some strange reason doesn't work on policeman or the military.

Knockout gas

Can be used as a proximity mine, timed mine or grenade. Knocks people out for a limited time.

Electricity mine

Can be used as a proximity mine, timed mine or grenade. Tendrils of electricity lash out and zap the nearest people.

Explosive mine

Can be used as a proximity mine, timed mine or grenade. It explodes.

Napalm mine

Can be used as a proximity mine, timed mine or grenade. It creates a festival of burning chemicals. Heavy duty.

EMP mine

Electro magnetic pulse mine. Only affects robots or other electronic equipment.

Mini rocket

Same as Gauss gun in original *Syndicate*

Guided Missile

Upgraded Gauss gun (locks on target).

Laser

Same as *Syndicate*. But there will be a delay after firing whilst the laser re-charges before you can use it again.

Beam

A more powerful laser, and the guys are planning it so you'll actually be able to see the beam on-screen. The re-charging time for the beam will be shorter than for the laser.

Razor wire

One for those who like to show creativity in their kills. You use this by stringing up the wire across street alleys and, well, it all gets rather bloody after that.

Persuadertron

the main weapon in the original *Syndicate*. It allows you to take

I've ever heard of) says he wants to include a way of completing each mission without blowing everything up. But once you've put a little thought into it, a lot of the game is still about blowing away everything and everyone that gets in your way, including buildings if necessary.

It might be a good idea to be wary of which non-player characters you chose to get nasty with. As well as rivals, and the three types of playing characters, *Syndicate Wars* includes a number of civilians (who can be enrolled using the Persuadertron), a police force and sundry military types. Kill a civilian, and the police get interested in you, kill a cop and the military comes after you. Pick a fight with the military, and, well, getting out of that city fast and not going back would be the best bet. Assuming, of course, you make it out alive.

In a new twist, player characters have emotions. To be more accurate, their attributes affect how they act on an emotional scale. This ranges from paranoid to psychotic presumably. Well-balanced, totally at peace with yourself, comes somewhere in the middle, although, to be honest, psychotic and paranoid seem more fitting to the whole *Syndicate* realm.

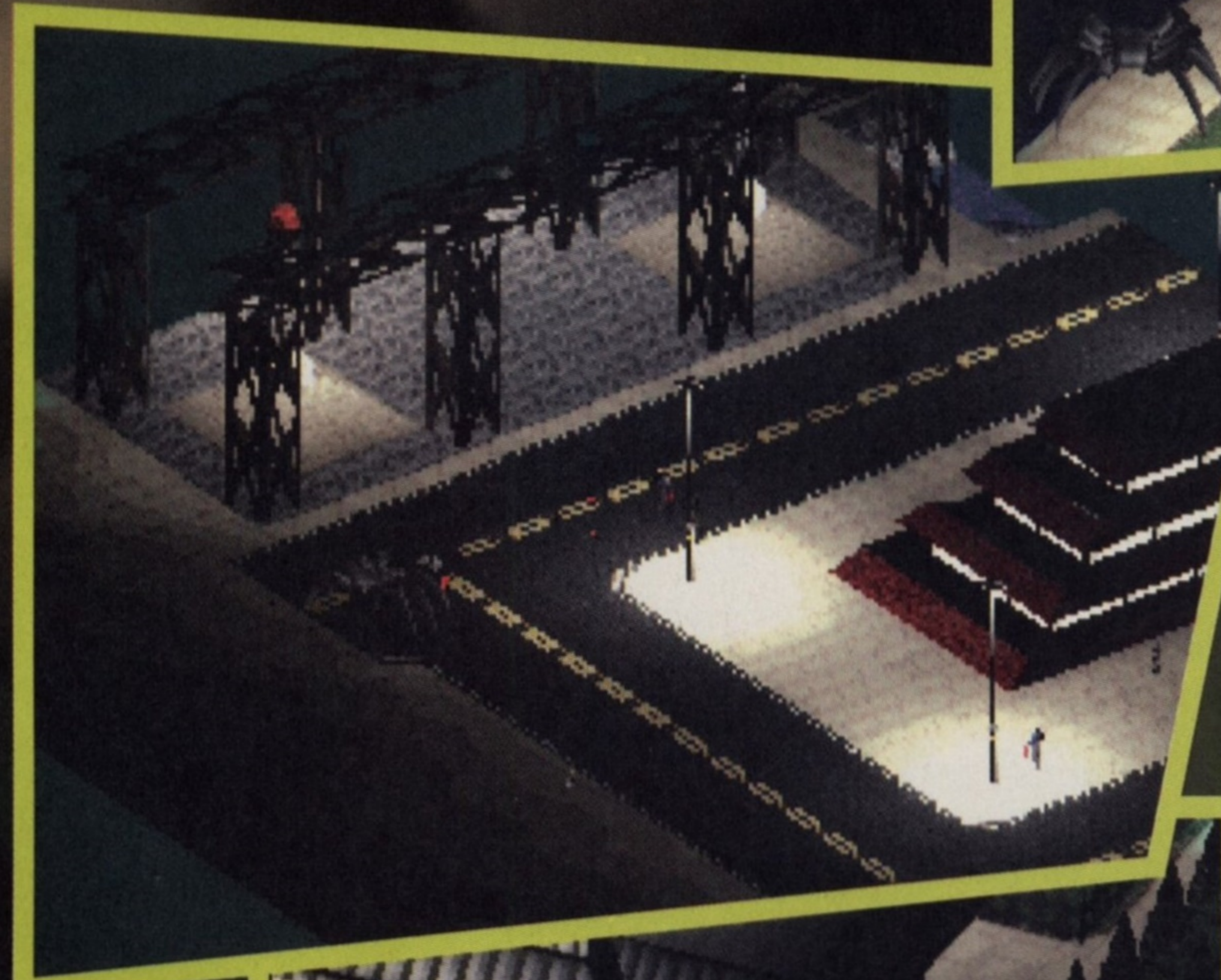
Another Bullfrog smash in the making? It certainly looks like it!



▲ Spiders ahead, spiders behind, spiders every-sodding-where. It definitely looks like curtains for me then.



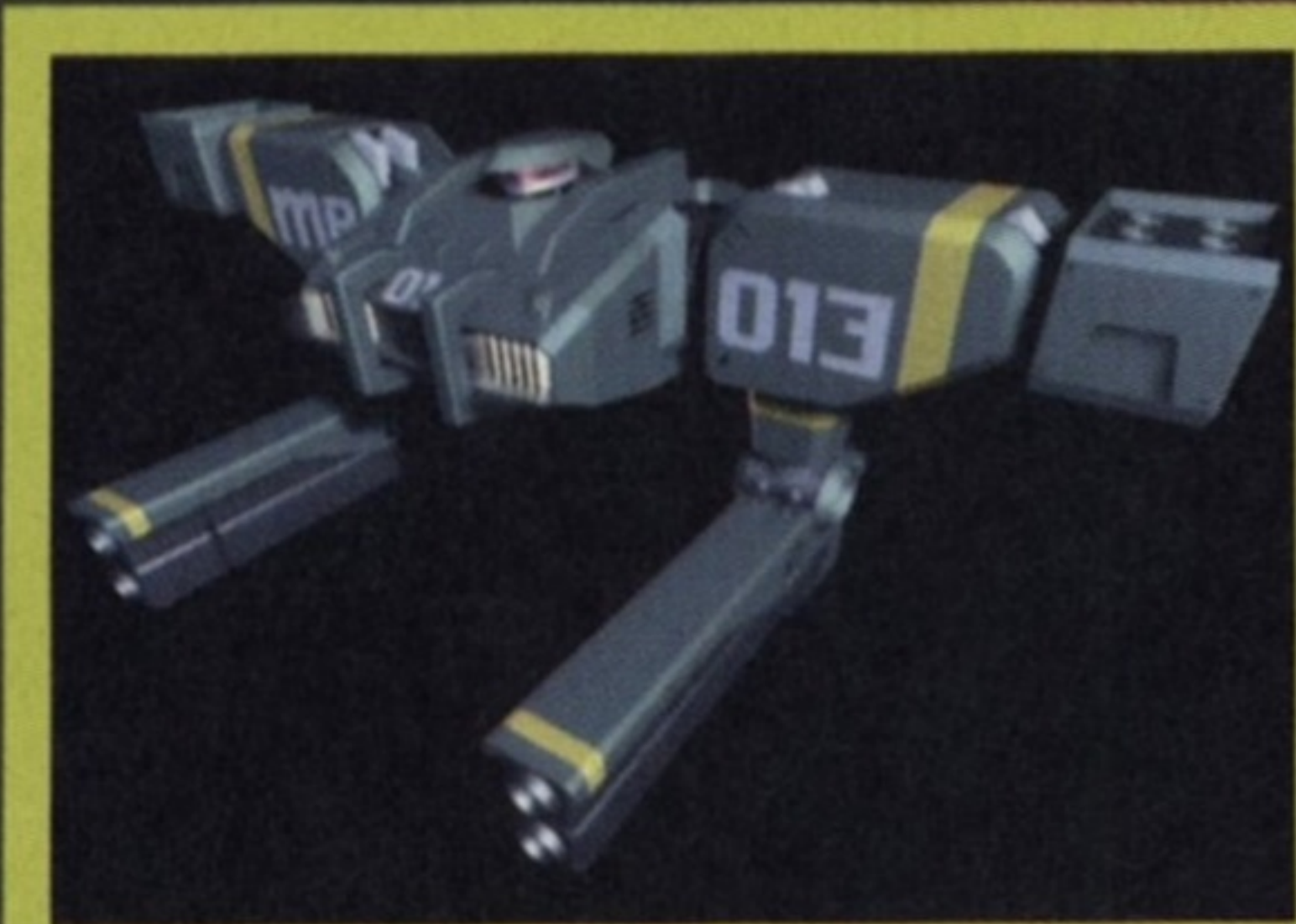
◀ If you were to shoot out those street lights everything would go very, very dark indeed. Touches like this really help build up the atmosphere of *Syndicate Wars*.



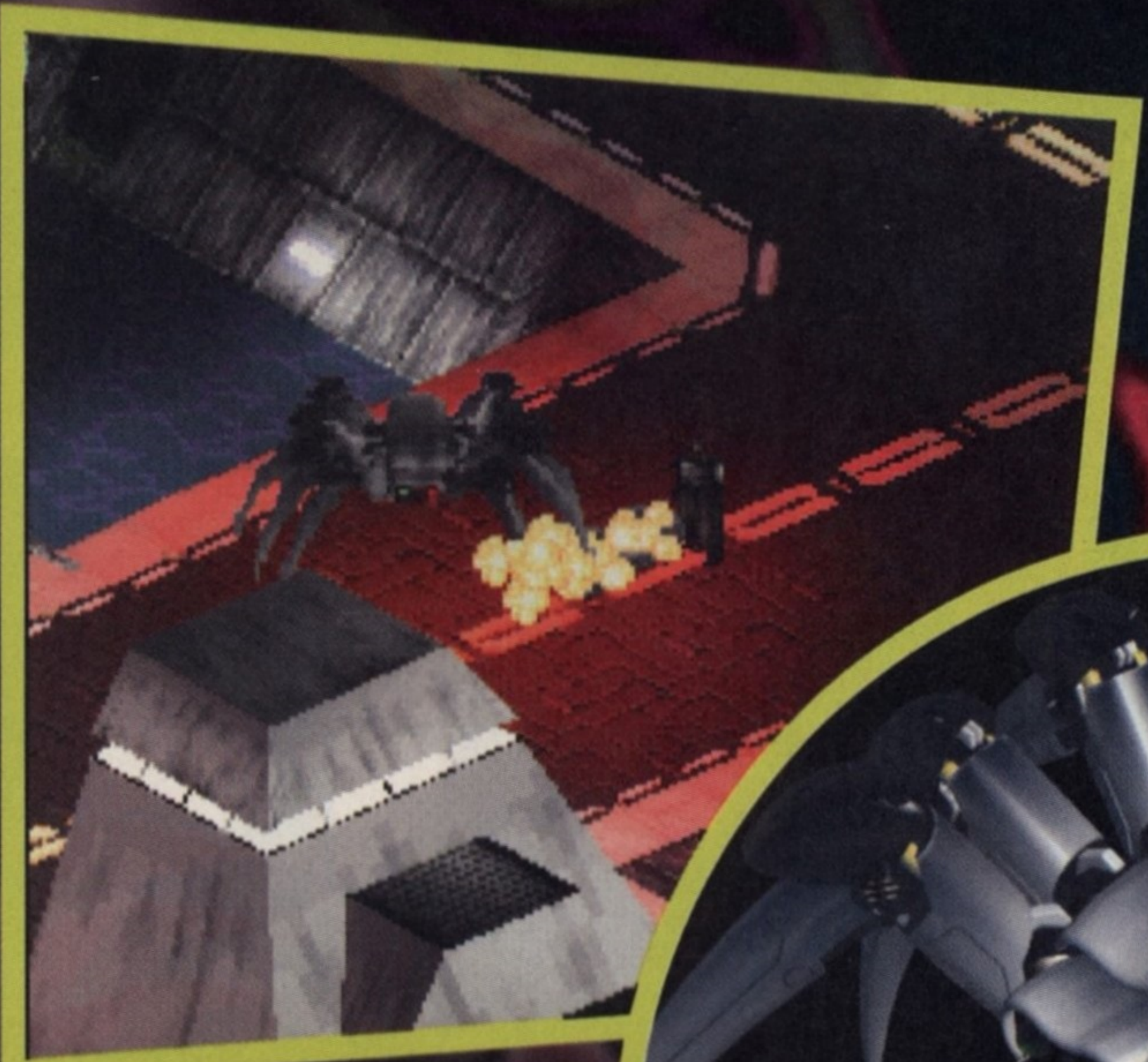
► Wahey! Electrici-tay! You normally only see this kind of thing in a RPG or adventure or something.



▲ Before the artist renders the model, he first creates a wire framework to check out how it will move.



▲ This model isn't complete yet. This is just the very top of a monster baddie. What do you mean 'just'?



▲ Of course, spiders aren't invincible. Especially if you've got some serious firepower.

▼ It's at times like this when you wish you hadn't wiped out that group of civilians on the last block. I don't think these guys want to talk things over.



◀ This is certainly something you'll want to stay away from.

control over other people's minds. This time around a few variations are planning to be introduced, such as the chosen victim's state of mind limiting the Persuadertron's effectiveness. It might even wear off.

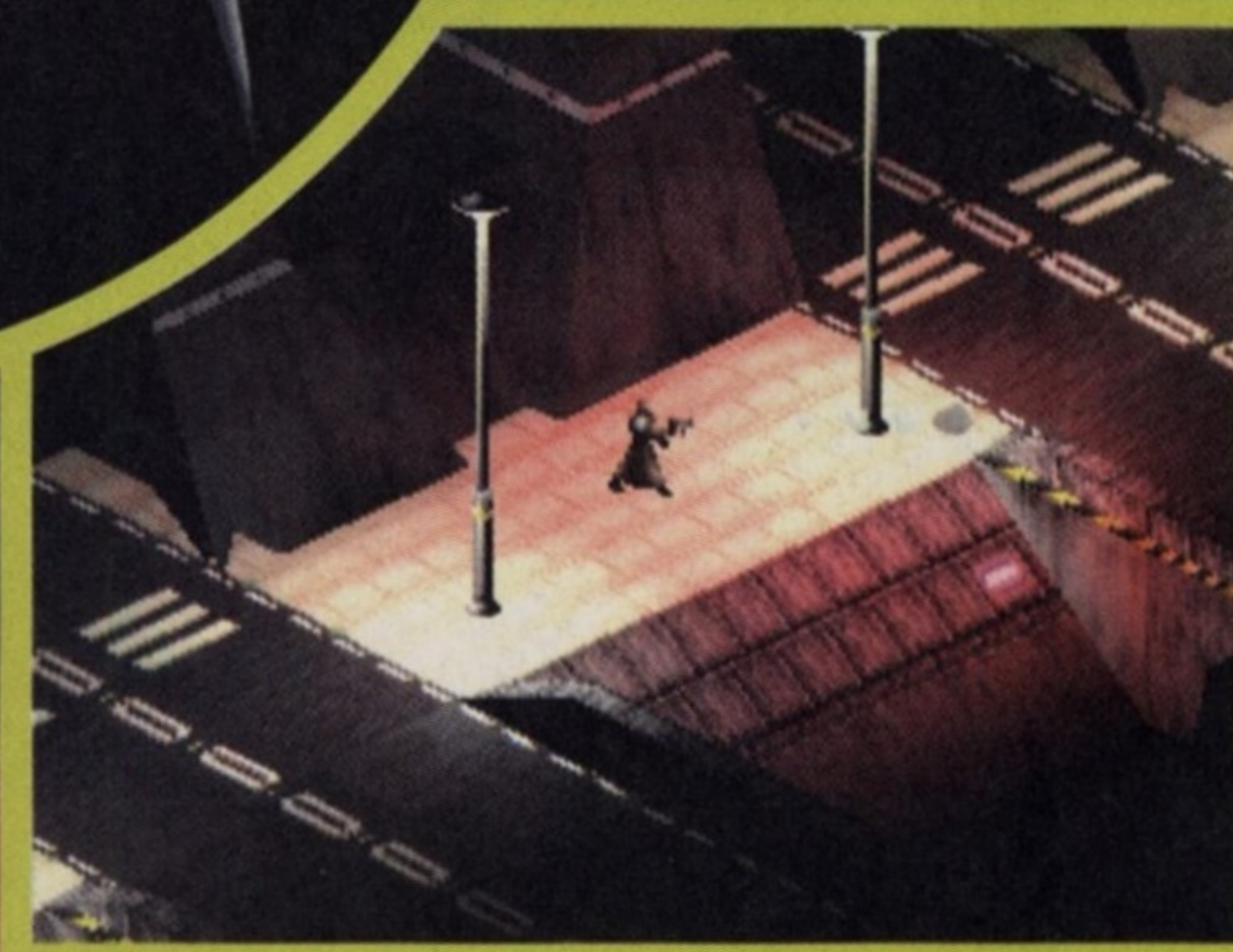
Energy shield

Deflects most weaponry, but not the taser.

Sonic blast

Stuns people within its range.

And as you might expect, the team is still working on a few ideas, so expect a few surprises.



◀ In some cities, access can be everything. Cities evolve as time goes on. I've come back to check on this drop, but there still doesn't seem a way down. Oh well.

▲ It takes time, it takes effort, but boy doesn't it look good when it's finished?

▶ Gosh, it seems so peaceful. You could hardly believe I'd just planted a bomb in that building.



Credits



Very music biz, and very *Syndicate*-like bleak here's the publicity photo of the *Syndicate Wars* team. From left to right: Ian Shaw (support programmer), Sean Masterton (level design), Russell Shaw (sound), Mike Diskette (lead programmer), Peter Molyneux (producer) Mike Man, (lead graphic artist).

Leap into

Lizard

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Prize

F

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Third
Prize

2

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1

What does the name Brontosaurus mean? (N.B., if you don't know, make something up, it doesn't matter)

2

Name one of the two Apes in *Primal Rage*.

3

Tell us a decent dinosaur joke (this is the cruncher).

ing ards!

want to rule Urth.
do I have to do?

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these two
simple questions
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Welcome

to the Evaluation Station. The most important and brutal section of the magazine. It is here that finished games are put through their paces by our rugged and handsome team of PlayStation experts.

Our review crew play bucketloads of games every month and you can be sure that a new title is going to have to be a bit special to get us excited. If it is, we'll praise it to the heavens. If it isn't, well, we may just tear its heart out! No flabby reviews from us pal! As we've said before, the only people we answer to are you.

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Guide to the Grades

In Play, games are rated on looks, sounds and also value for money. Any game priced at more than £40 had better make sure it delivers big-time or we'll want to know why not. The writer will also add an extra category, particular to that game. Some of these will be fun, some may give an important hint at a particular feature of the product itself.

All of these categories are marked out of ten and are followed by the Played score, which is judged entirely on how much fun the game is. This is rated out of 100, and breaks down like this:-

94-100 These games are exceptional. They're fun, stay fun and are groundbreaking. We just love 'em to little pieces guys.

85-93 Games we recommend. Fun, lasting, value for money, but not necessarily hugely original.

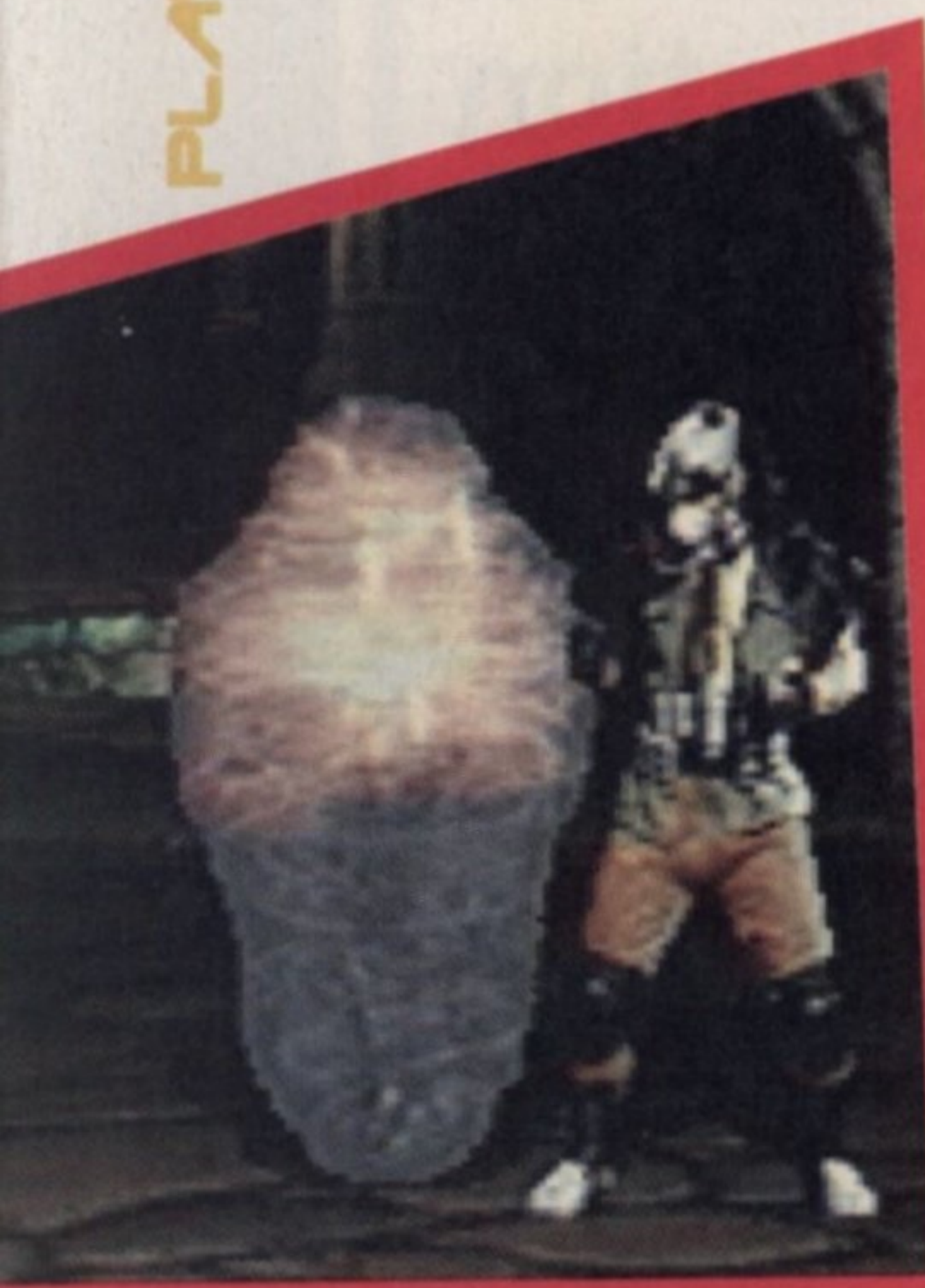
80-84 Games that maybe one member of the team would score at 85+, but the others don't really feel is worth splashing out over £40 on.

70-79 Games that are entertaining, but we don't think have lasting appeal OR games that are above average but slightly flawed.

65-69 Average games which may appeal to fans of the genre but should be avoided by almost everyone else.

0-64 Not good enough. Games scoring less than 65 automatically become short reviews, although not *all* short reviews are of poor games.

Are 3D beat 'em-ups dead? They'll wish they were when they get in the ring with MK3. Ryan Butt gets worryingly blood-thirsty.



PLAY information

- Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment
- Customer support: 0881 505 505*
- Expected price: £49.99
- Expected when: November

B lur and Oasis? Ha! Not so long ago a real battle was raging. Not the kind determined by who can screw the most groupies or quaff the most booze, either. No, t'was the *original* battle of the beat 'em-ups – *Street Fighter II* with its exhilarating gameplay, Vs *Mortal Kombat* with its... er, gore.

Street Fighter II undoubtedly won back then, but these days it's a different story entirely. The movie-orientated direction Capcom headed off in resulted in a disastrous cinematic turd that sapped the credibility straight out of the subject matter, plus a decent, but not brilliant new *SF* game, whereas the *MK* series has progressed from strength to strength with two corking sequels, the latter of which is here in all its coin-op perfect entirety on the Sony PlayStation.

MK3 is a far cry from the feeble seven-character original that emerged several years ago. These days, the body count has risen to a staggering 15 (including the secret masked avenger, Smoke), and whereas the original appeal lurked in the novel "Fatality" finishing moves, *MK3* throws the gauntlet down for the gamer to uncover all 90 of them – that's 83 more than the original game, and six more than *MKII*, phew!

Other tempting attractions in the game include a new hyper dash button which causes your chosen gore meister to run full pelt at the opposition and then, using the combo system, smash the crap out of said unfortunate at lightning speed resulting in rather fantastic full throttle

gore explosions!

As if that wasn't enough, the game also comes complete with Kombat Kodes to enhance the fights,



The body count has risen to a staggering 15

and a couple of deadly new boss adversaries to batter.

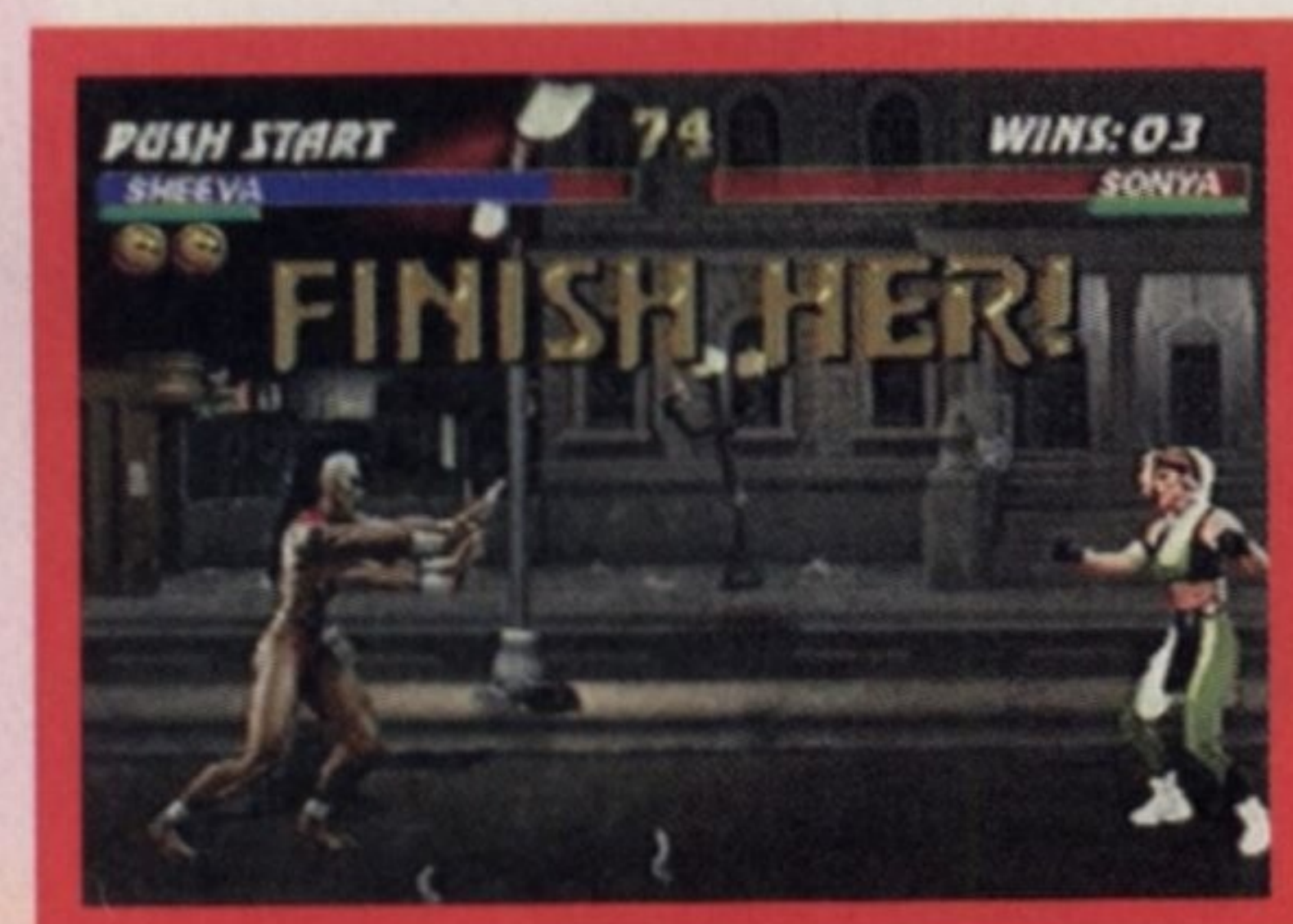
I would never have believed that a 2D beat 'em-up would be able to hold its ground against the 3D polygon assault, but *MK3* offers enough sizzling new features to out-do even the most jaw-droppingly advanced fighters. The dash and combo manoeuvres notch the gameplay up a gear or two, meaning that *MKII* masters need to report for re-education at the learn more complex and sophisticated gameplay school. You can grasp some of the more familiar characters easier than others, but there is still a great deal to learn when picking this up for the first time.

Mortal Kombat

Appearance wise, *MK3* couldn't come closer to the coin-op without actually being the coin-op – it's amazing to behold. The speed and attention to detail is so finely tuned that if you squint, have a mate blow stagnant fog smoke all over you, invite a coach load of screaming foreigners over to commentate, and use a pad that doesn't work, you could almost 'be there'.

The real excitement though comes from the Fatalities, Babalities, Animalities, and Friendships which can be both simple, or tear-jerkingly hard to perform (especially those f-ing Animalities!!!).

Either way, just practising them guarantees a month's worth of gametime, and, coupled with the unbeatable single and duel-player tournaments, is, for once, fantastic value for money. Just don't forget your sick-bag.

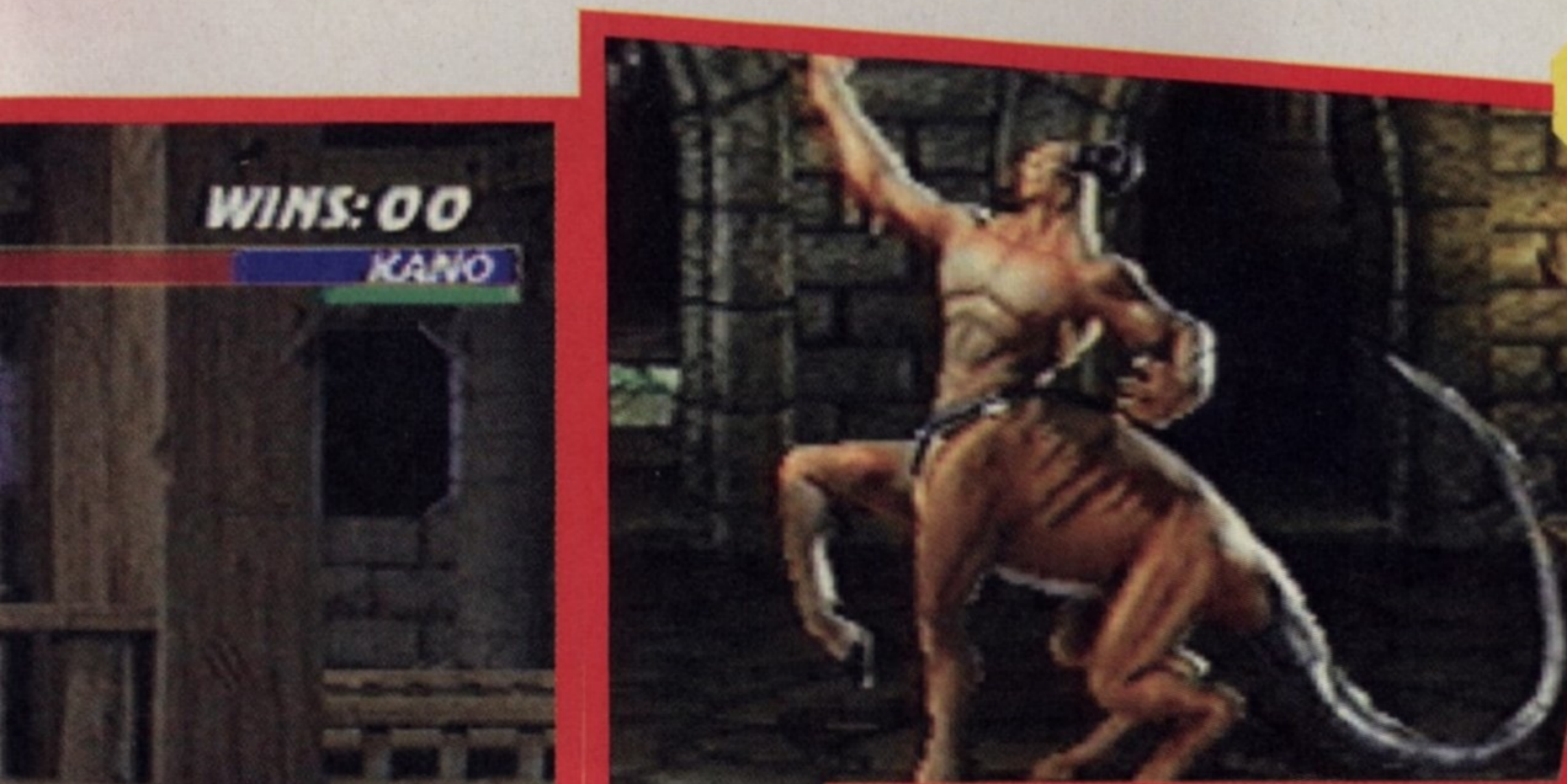


▲ Proof: four arms are better than two.



combat

3



▼ DIY was never one of Cindel's strong points.



The complete guide to *Mortal Kombat 'alities'*

Undecided how to decapitate with style? Let *Play* guide you on which coup de grace to deliver.

1 Fatalities

Simply a gratuitously violent dead move which usually consists of the victor dismembering his unworthy opponent amidst a torrent of distinctly ketchup-looking blood.

2 Friendships

Not so much a kind hearted gesture, but a sure-fire way of completely humiliating your opponent. Friendships can consist of anything from giving away flowers to transforming into a past kombatant and inviting them to play an MK3 coin-op.

3 Babalities

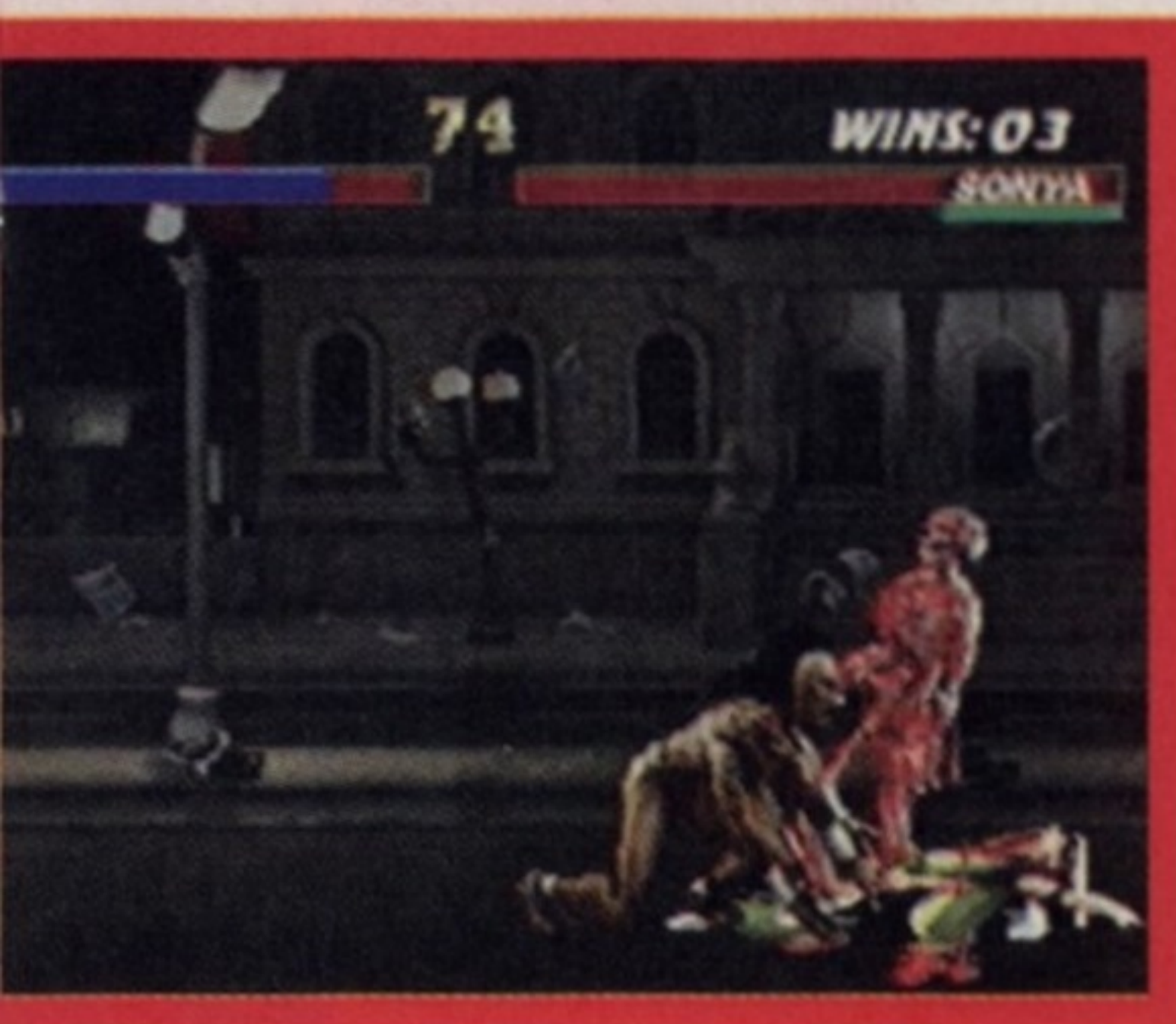
To render your opponent completely harmless, these codes will revert them back to being mere incontinent toddlers without a nasty bone in their frail, wee bodies. Ahh! Bless 'em.

4 Mercies

If you're really getting in to pummeling your opponent and don't really want to finish them off quickly, by performing a Mercy you'll give them some more energy to continue fighting. A very noble gesture on your part which is usually met with a barrage of insults from your mates.

5 Animalities

This started out as a mere rumour when MKII was doing the rounds, however, so impressed were Tobias and Boon with the concept that they decided to incorporate it into MK3. Basically, after performing a Mercy and going on to the second "Finish Him" command, your fighter will morph into some kind of demonic creature and proceed to maul your opponent. Brilliantly entertaining!



▲ "Listen mate, I'm really sorry my wife cooked your brother for sunday roast."



PLAY verdict

Looks:
Sounds:
Guts:
Value:

Played 93%

Bloody unbeatable stuff gore fans!

Zero Divide

Strange name for a stranger game! *Rise Of The Robots* in 3D anyone? Ryan Butt cringes at the thought.



e've already had an extremely nice looking 3D beat 'em-up with little substance

(*Tohshinden*, the updated UK version of which is reviewed on page 52), so do we really need another one? *Zero Divide* is all very well and good, but we know what the PlayStation is capable of now – and it can do a lot better than this.

Zero Divide features eight assorted mechs which include a psychotic scorpion, a deranged kangaroo (Skippy would turn in his grave), the token female droid, and a few other instantly forgettable characters. The aim? Simply trash your opponent and feed on the spoils, what could be easier?

If you thought *Tohshinden* was basic, then *Zero Divide* takes

the piss one step further – you only actually use three buttons on the control pad THREE! With eight on offer, the programmers could have been a little bit more adventurous. No prizes for guessing what they do – just a standard kick, punch and block. Admittedly, the game looks very nice – although the rotation factor isn't milked to the extent of *Tohshinden*, but everything looks dandy and seems to work well. The best feature is undoubtedly the way in which unfortunate droids can grab onto the edge of the battle arena if they're tipped off the side, before springing back into action and flooring their opponent in one foul swoop – good stuff. The way in which your decked opponent's remains decompose and disintegrate after the fight is also a top-notch effect that is worthy of a mention.



▲ Living on the razor's edge, the two crazed droids fight just inches from death.

Why do games like this never quite work?

The sound is also very impressive, to get you fired up into that frenzied fighting mood, the final boss commentates throughout the bouts uttering such memorable phrases as "Oooh that really hurt!" and "Is that the best you can do?" – all completely tongue in cheek of course. Shame really that the actual gameplay couldn't follow the same high standards. The special moves are wickedly tricky to pull off and the

standard moves feel so slow and unresponsive that you get peeved off with the whole affair after a few hours. No one character seems to generate enough style and personality to stand out, instead you've basically got a motley crew of androids who are all several screws short of a steel plate.

Why do games like this never quite work? Is it because they're genuinely unplayable or is it just because the nation's gamers prefer to fight with digitised flesh

and bone? In the case of *Zero Divide* it is definitely down to playability, or rather than the lack of it, because if the moves were flashier and the controls a tad more responsive this would be a cracker. As it stands, a rather premature trip to the scrap heap looms for *Zero Divide*.



▲ Does anyone know what kind of droid this is? What practical use could it possibly have apart from maiming innocent Ford production line mechs. The dirty devil!

PLAY+
information

- Publisher: Zoom
- Customer support: No UK number
- Expected price: £79.99 (import)
- Expected when: Import out now

vide

He Ain't Heavy... He's My Robot

Robots, who need 'em? It's a well known fact that every being with artificial intelligence has a tendency to go off the rails once in a while. Take films for example, Number Five in *Short Circuit* went nutty and proceeded to speak like Julian Clary, everything from toasters to vending machines turned into homicidal maniacs in *Maximum Overdrive*, and then to cap it all, Arnie became good in *T2*. But that's not where it ends,

any game featuring robots, especially beat 'em-ups, have previously turned out to be smellier than bullock gonads. Observe:

Rise Of The Robots (all formats)

The prime stinker. Oh how the nation proceeded to crap in their cartridge slots when they realised how utterly awful it was.



Ultraman (SNES)

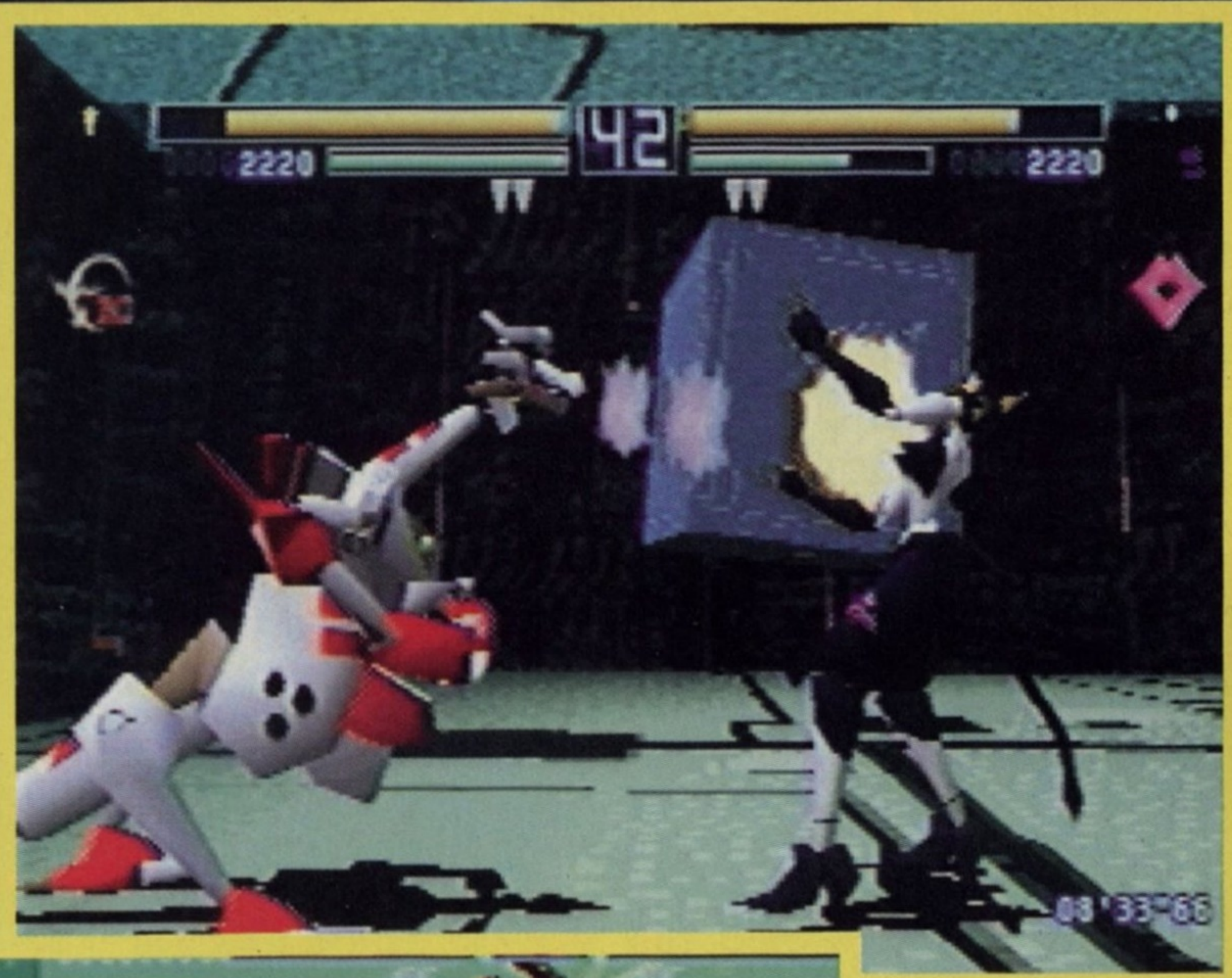
For years this stood firm as the yard stick to measure awful SNES games by, and anyone in possession of a copy had to emigrate to Australia to avoid victimisation.

Cyborg Justice (Mega Drive)

This game single-handedly dragged the genre down to an all time low and proceeded to die a grizzly death without shifting many copies. Ha sweet justice!

Cosmic Carnage (32X)

The feeble amount of enthusiasm drummed up for the 32X was instantly crushed when punters clapped eyes on this pile of donkey's poo.



▲ Horror of horrors! Muffin the mule has returned in mech form. Who do ya love?

▼ Crash! Boom! Clatter! Sparks fly as the sarcastic ruler looks on in hysterics.



PLAY verdict

Looks:
Sounds:
Flexibility:
Value:

Played 68%

Too heavy to handle!

Street Figh

Highly innovative instalment in the saga, or just a cop out? Ryan Butt puts *SF: The Movie* in the dock.

PLAY information

● Publisher: Acclaim
● Customer support: 0171 344 5000
● Expected price: £39.99
● Expected when: Out Now

If there were any justice in this crazy world, the person responsible for snorting up the idea of a real life *SF* movie would be hanging by his testicles from the Empire State building by now. Let's face it, Jean Claude, Kylie, and the hopelessly mis-cast (and now sadly departed) Raul Julia just couldn't cut it as real life flesh and bone recreations of the phenomenally successful video game characters. So it seems strange that a game paying homage to this cinematic low note should be produced – and even stranger that it should actually turn out to be rather good.

Not that Capcom has suddenly become a hotbed of innovation – *SF: The Movie* (the game that is) features a selection of the most popular characters, plus some new geezer called Sawada (the bad guy in the film).

Looks wise, Capcom has swallowed an almighty slice of humble pie and gone for that distinctive *Mortal Kombat* appearance with each character throwing punches and ripping out spinal columns as digitised versions of their big-screen counterparts. This is all very well, but for those of a more nervous disposition, the sight of Van Damme strutting his stuff like the over-inflated muscle bound sod he is may be a bit too much to bear – justice is served, however, as his character is undoubtably the crappiest out of the lot (teehee!).

All those gamers out there expecting something new from *SF: The Movie* will have their hopes slightly dashed when they discover that the action churned out

in this fifth sequel is almost identical to *Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo*. (but then again, did you seriously expect anything radical from the guys that brought you *Street Fighter 2*, *Street Fighter 2: Champion Edition*, *Street Fighter 2 Turbo*, *Super Street Fighter 2* and, of course, *Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo*.)

SF: The Movie kicks off with some stunning full motion video footage that summarises the hottest snippets of action from the film (so it isn't a particularly long intro!) and then the fresh new gleaming logo is rammed home to signify to *Street Fighter* connoisseurs that the next one must surely have a three in the title somewhere (please, please, please).

Apart from an interesting movie mode, and the standard one-player solo brawl, the real beauty of this game, as always, is the two-player game. Getting to grips with each of the characters in their new guises is a piece of piss as their moves are exactly as before. At least this means you can shove the manual where all manuals deserve to go and jump right in.

Graphically this game is a far cry from the cartoon appearance we know and love. The more menacing brutes such as Blanka and Bison

now look like crazed clowns. The fluidity of some of the moves have also lost their sting, but hey, with new combos to contend with and awesome super moves, you'll hardly notice after a while.

So the big question now is how does this handle itself against the mighty *MK3*? Well, it's not a patch on it really. The third instalment of gore-related antics offers far more longevity than simply another *SF* game. *SF: The Movie* is pretty damn 'ard, but Bison's rather camp attire hardly compensates for Motaro these days does it?

▼ 'Hyper flaming uppercut thingy!' The clothes may be as tasteless as ever but who could fault those devastating moves?



▼ Balrog subjects Van Damme to some serious chinning.

ter: The Movie



▲ Amidst a blinding flash of light, the fat Russian forces Blanka to perform oral pleasure!



▲ Ryu shows Balrog who the boss is by dishing out a serious portion of fireballs.

▼ Vega displays some of his fancy aerial antics – bet that hurt!



That
distinctive
Mortal
Kombat
appearance



PLAY verdict

Looks: 
Sounds: 
Well Hard: 
Value: 

Played 85%

A few more steroids needed

Movie madness

Films based upon the current "In" thing amongst the teeny bopper generations always sink lower than shark excrement when put into practice, let us examine the past evidence M'lord:

BMX Bandits (1983)

Who could forget a young Nicole Kidman showing all the lads how to table-top? Quite a few actually!

Masters Of The Universe (1987)

Macho Swede, Dolph Lundgren failed to give He-man any more life than the plastic toy he was based on in this fantasy adventure.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (1990)

A rare exception in the string of studio blunders, TMNT did to pizza sales what Michele Pfeiffer did to PVC catsuits.

Super Mario Bros. (1993)

Bob Hoskins donned the offensive dungarees and iffy moustache of Nintendo's multi-million selling platform hero, say no more.

Mighty Morpin Power Rangers: The Movie (1995)

Arrgh! We're going down! Mayday! Mayday! Dive! Dive!

Nine as hard as nine inch nails

Even gamers harder than granite will have their work cut out battling past the vast multitude of bosses in *Tekken*. Here is a brief rundown on the full line-up of genuine head-cases, plus all their abilities:

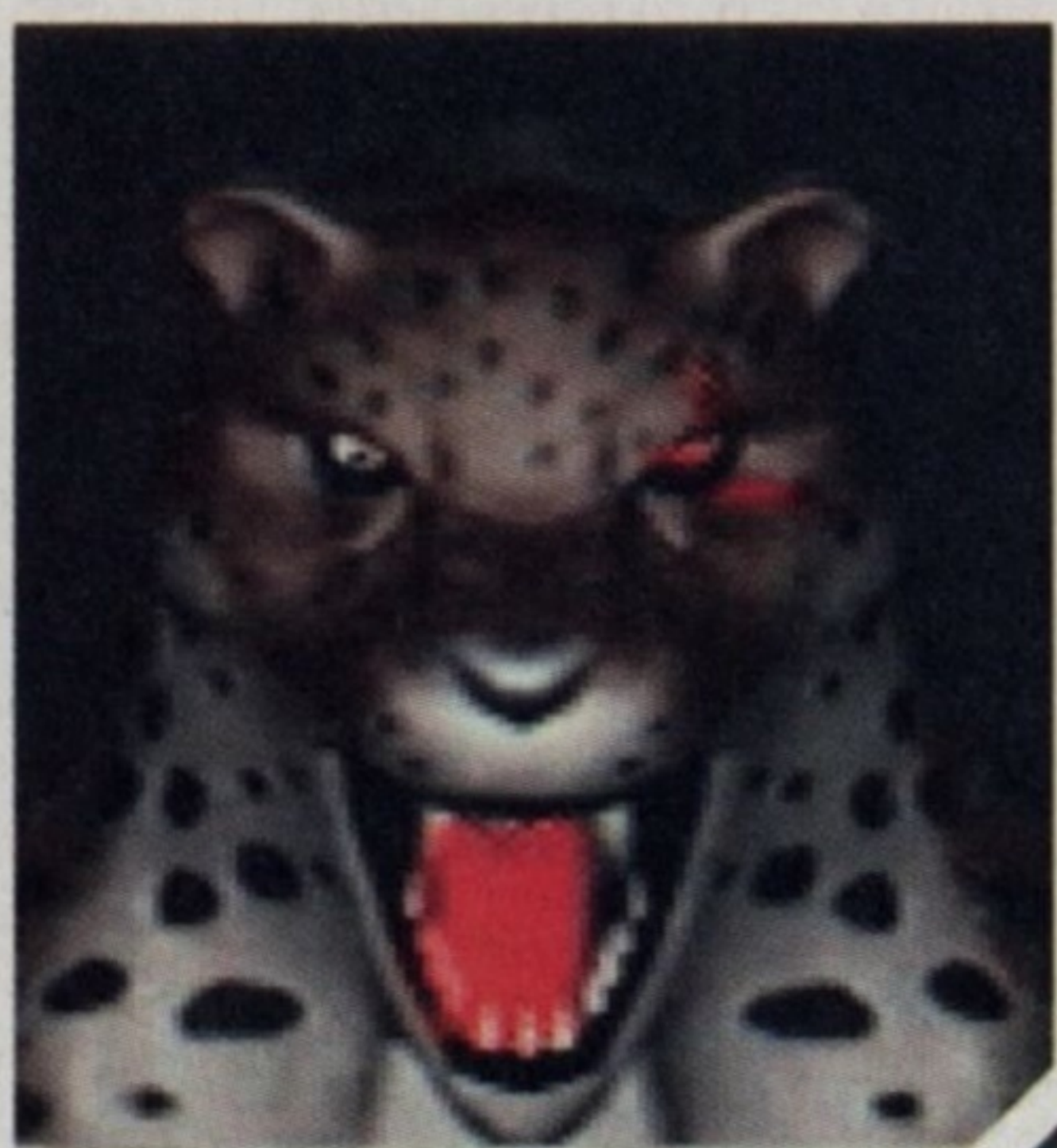
Anna — Saucy Temptress

Agile, strong, and damn sexy to boot. The vixen from hell will take you in her arms, stare into your frightened eyes, and then chuck you into the air — landing with a bang on your head. But we forgive her cos she's cute.



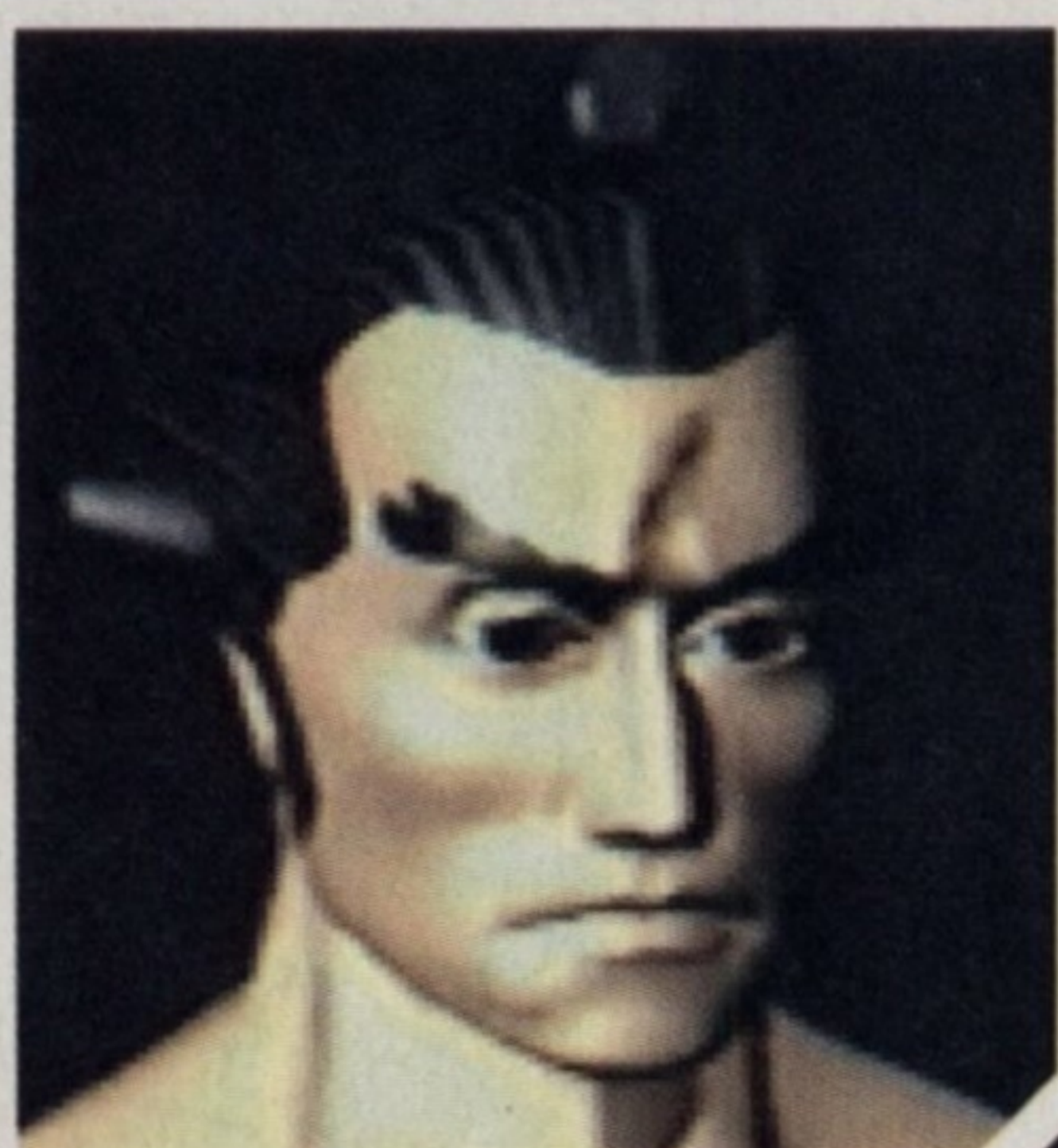
Armour King — Dastardly Doppelganger

If you thought the original King was a pain in the rectum, check out his even more psychotic twin. Armour King will break both your arms and then bounce on your head — charming, I'm sure!



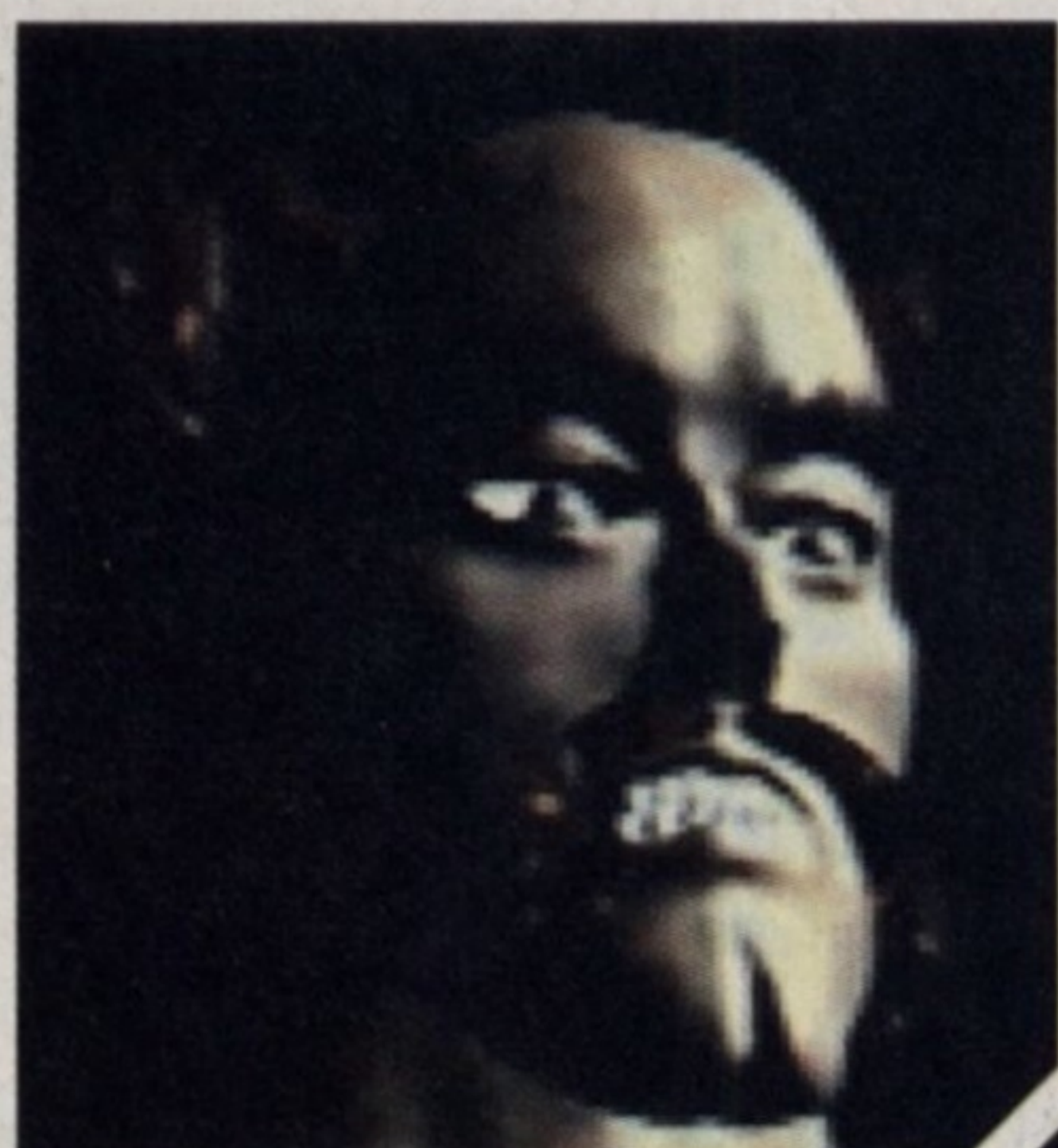
Ganryu — Overweight Judo Man

A cross between Ryu from *Street Fighter* and Cyril Smith, this bulky bloke doesn't fare too well in the agility stakes. However, if he gets his weight behind him and catches you unaware, say your prayers.



Heihachi — Mad Neck Breaker

The nutty Russian with the Bjork hair style may look soft as custard to the average bloke in the street, but if you expose too much neck to this weirdo he'll throttle you like a chicken amidst some very strange trippy electric effects — what a buzz, man!



Tekken

Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee, *Tekken* bounds into the ring to happily take on all comers. Ryan Butt takes the commentators' mike.

Cor what a blinder! *Tekken* took us all by surprise as it socked all comers into the next millennium on its import rounds. Now that the game has made it into the official swarm, it hasn't eased up one bit — it's still exceptional beyond compare. *Tekken* isn't like other beat 'em-ups in many ways. For a start it isn't clogged down with unnecessary gore and spurts of blood to give it a hard edge, instead it relies solely on the hard hitting blows and the ultra realistic recoils that come as a result — in many ways this is far more disturbing than seeing some digitised goon having his head unconvincingly severed. Another top feature is the control method; hard punch? Soft punch? What's the bloody point of that? If you're going to pound someone then surely every punch would be as hard as possible, and thankfully *Tekken* does away with this pointless control system in favour of four buttons that simply control each limb of the character's anatomy. This system makes it amazingly easy to string constructive attacks together for dazzling results — killer combos just appear from nowhere and floor your opponent in a matter of seconds.

The gathering throng of blood-thirsty avengers is a contrasting blend of regular Kung Fu geezers,

dainty females who kick like steroid-charged mules, and the obligatory nutter — in this case, some twerp in a tiger costume who growls and slurps a lot. It's an impressive line-up, each fighter offering a completely different style and array of moves — none of this Ryu/Ken similar fighter bollocks here matey!

Praise should also be given for the simplicity of the game design, apart from a short intro you're left to your own devices to get straight down to the nitty gritty task of kicking ass. There are no superfluous match-up screens and suchlike, just pick your prize fighter and get on with it. It's perfect for the few frills, all action approach running throughout the whole game.

Tekken really is totally enthralling, even if you lose, a few rapid taps of the start button and you'll be fighting again within a second.

The difficulty level is what elevates this game to classic status in my book, it's so finely tuned and balanced that this game instantly appeals to all ages. It starts off easy, needing no more skill than it takes to bash the joystick against your head to beat the early contenders. Then suddenly it switches and you find yourself locked in an energetic game of chess with your opponent, blocking and countering their every move. Which leads me nicely onto the bosses, how many do you think



ken



PLAY information

- Publisher: Sony
- Customer support: 0881 505 505*
- Expected price: £49.99
- Expected when: October

◀ A well executed roundhouse kick connects with the lowly unfortunate who's about to go down.

there are? Two? Three? Seven? Think again because *Tekken* boasts an incredible NINE bosses! Admittedly, you don't fight them all in one go, you meet different sets depending on which character you use – ingenious or what methinks?

So do you really need any other reason why *Tekken* is the greatest beat 'em-up of our time? If so then get this now game and let it do all the talking, alright!



▲ More Ariel high-jinks as the two fighters jummel each other.



PLAY verdict

Looks: ■■■■■■■■
 Sounds: ■■■■■■■■
 Stamina: ■■■■■■■■
 Value: ■■■■■■■■

Played 95%

Simply the best (for now)

Kunimitsu – Sickie-Waving Nutter

The twice-as-disturbed twin of Yoshimitsu is just pure evil. When the fights commence he darts towards you slashing maniacally with his farming tools. Get too close and he'll pile drive you into the turf. Like, what did we ever do to him?



Lee – Nasty Piece Of Work

Smart appearances are deceiving, give Lee an inch and he'll take a football pitch. Sharp with his kicks and fatal with his throws, you'll not have much time to counter attack when Lee's attacking in full force.



Kuma – The Cuddly Bear

Ahhh! Isn't he cute? The adorably fluffy Kuma may look like an ideal pet, but if you take him home with you he is likely to dive onto your kin, shattering their bones and then mangle their still twitching limbs. He has got a pretty mean right hook as well.



P. Jack – Tooled-Up Clone

When the cyborg construction workers responsible for assembling Jack ran out of arms, they decided to use pneumatic drills instead – practical or what? The result is a pre-programmed killer who'll happily mangle your face if he takes a dislike to it. Keep your distance.



Wang – Wise Man With Attitude

He may be small but Wang is a skilled veteran in the art of kicking young whippersnappers' ass. His throws are pretty lethal, but it's not until he backs up to you and unleashes his deadly bottom breaker that you feel his full wrath.



If looks could kill then this game would have killed off Japan and inflicted mass genocide on Britain by now, but does *Play* give a Tosh?

Battle Arena Toshinden

PLAY+ information

- Publisher: Sony
- Customer support: 0881 505 505*
- Expected price: £44.99
- Expected when: Now



ow. Check out those screenshots. This game's Japanese launch helped the PlayStation kick the Saturn

into touch on the Journalistic playing field. It looks wonderful. And looking at it again five months on, it's still easy to see what the fuss was about. *Battle Arena Toshinden* takes 3D polygon beat 'em-ups one step further by actually incorporating a third dimension – this means that the gamer can actually outmanoeuvre their opponent by circling around them as opposed to simply advancing and retreating. Another good element is the range of weapons on offer. Each of the eight fighters boast their own unique brand of maiming device, whether it be clubs, spears, knives, swords, and whips – the latter belonging to the lovely leather-clad Sonia, every sado-masochistic chap's desire! Unfortunately, it doesn't take

long to master the characters and work out all their moves in full. This leaves a game gifted in graphical wonder a little redundant. The UK version has been improved in the sense that the special moves are no longer accessed via the top buttons, making it slightly more challenging. Only slightly though. The lack of combos is a real problem, making it tough to string together decent attack patterns and this is a real boo-boo for a beat 'em-up. Shame really, because if more effort had gone into polishing up the gameplay by simply making sure there was more to it, *Battle Arena Toshinden* would have been a blinding piece of software. As it stands though, it will always go down as being the best looking beat 'em-up ever... shame about the gameplay!

▼ Sofia treats the randy boss to his weekly fix of sado masochistic pleasure... or perhaps it's just one of her special moves!

Unfortunately, it doesn't take



▲ Fancy footwork from Duke as he runs rings around tiny Ellis.

▼ Gaia obviously over-indulged on the old lagers, that's one major barf!



PLAY+ verdict

- Looks: ██████████
- Sounds: ██████████
- Simplicity: ██████████
- Value: ██████████

Played 76%
Great looking stuff for beginners

Fighting Frenzy

Who comes up trumps in the ultimate battle of the beat 'em-ups?

Well, you've seen the reviews and how they compare, but how can five games which are all essentially beat 'em-ups differ so much? After all, fighting is fighting right? Wrong actually!

What we've got here is a collection of games that combine the same theme with different executions. Some of the titles bound forward in terms of technology and sophistication, others bask in the glory of others by attempting to emulate them, and then you've got the slackers, the games that have continued to evolve at a very steady pace, offering nothing particularly new to the genre.

If you take the five games on display here and break them down, they're all good in their own way, but they appeal to different people, here we examine who would buy and more importantly, play games like this.

2D Has-beens?

Street Fighter II: The Movie

Arguably, *SFII*'s date has well and truly expired. Us journos remember a time when even the merest glimpse of *SFII* on the cover of a mag was guaranteed to shift a zillion copies. Nowadays though, it's a different story entirely. Half of the gaming nation want the latest high-tech wizardry generated by the likes of *Virtua Fighter* and *Tekken*, and the once loyal elite following of gamers that stuck with the series through thick and thin and were dumb enough to fork out for three versions on the SNES, have deserted the stable and wandered over to the *Mortal Kombat* throng for the more accomplished 2D beat 'em-up gamers. However, although not quite as groundbreaking as it once was, Capcom have at least bucked up their ideas and steered the dynasty ahead with their movie game, even it is almost identical to the *Super Turbo* version. *SF* fans will enjoy this latest instalment, but fans of the film won't – although this is mainly because there are no fans of the film.

► **Play's recommended audience:** Crap film buffs and young, loyal fans.

Mortal Kombat 3

Proving that the 2D beat 'em-up market can still survive as long as fresh ideas are poured into it, *MK3* is exactly what a great fighting game should be. Filled to the brim with exciting new characters, combat moves, secret personalities, and those all too important Fatalities, it will keep fans of the digitised gore-fest

happy as pie whilst continuously attracting new Kombatants to the genre at an alarming rate. In short this is top-notch value for money and will appeal to everyone apart from easily offended turds, and kids too young to understand that the violence is all make believe.

► **Play's recommended audience:** Absolutely everyone and their cat.



3D Destroyers

Zero Divide



Ha! Zero future more like! As our box out displayed, robot beat 'em-ups never work and anyone who thinks otherwise is talking straight out of their arse.

For a start robots don't bleed, so anyone wanting full throttle gore will snub this in their droves. Also, I could play this game for hours and come away not being able to remember any of the character's sodding names. Personality goes a long way in a game, and *Zero Divide* has none. In its favour, it will impress with its visuals and sonic sound effects, but it plays nowhere near as well as *Tekken* and suffers considerably because of a lack of impressive moves.

► **Play's recommended audience:** Folk with more money than sense.

Battle Arena Toshinden

This was the game thrust the PlayStation's capabilities into the limelight and urinated on the graphical inferiority of *Virtua Fighter*, even though it obviously drew its inspiration from it. Unfortunately, the gameplay doesn't follow the same high standards set by the graphics and so the phrase 'all mouth and no trousers' springs to mind. The motley crew of fighters will appeal to most audiences and the inclusion of weapons is a vital plus point in its favour. What's here is good, but it's too basic for accomplished fighters.

► **Play's recommended audience:** Beat 'em-up novices.

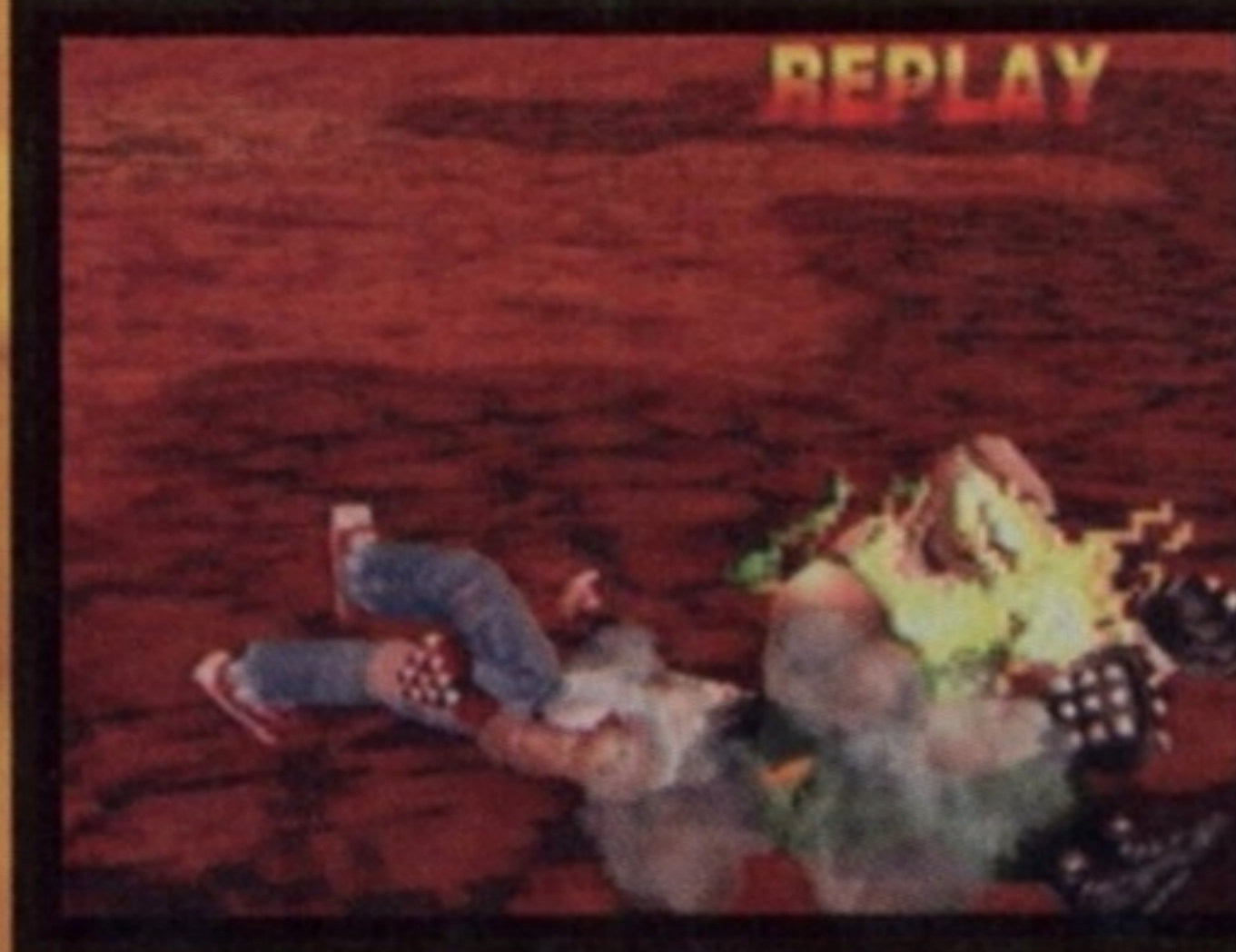


Tekken

Although this appeared after *Virtua Fighter* set the standards for others to follow, it is still an exceptional game that easily outshines Sega's effort and the PlayStation is the ideal niche to expose its glory. *Tekken* is the kind of game that anyone can pick up and enjoy, but only the most gifted of beat 'em-ups

addicts will progress through to the challenging bosses. The control system is the most responsive and effective seen in a fighting game and the endless array of devastating combos means that the gamer won't get even slightly bored this side of the year 2000 – probably!

► **Play's recommended audience:** Dedicated beat 'em-ups fans, and anyone looking for a challenge.



You wanna get Loaded? You wanna be free, to do what you wanna do? Asam Ahmad puts on his balaclava, picks up a flame thrower and argues his point of view...

Loaded

PLAY information

- Publisher: Gremlin Interactive
- Customer support: 01142 753 423
- Expected price: £44.99
- Expected when: November

Want some real action? Don't care about rules? *Loaded* is one game where the rules are few and the action is plenty. The plot behind the game is rather simple, but also rather depraved. Rather than being the good guy, you actually play the role of a bad guy. Eh? Come again? Yup, this is a twisted world. Six of the world's most hardened psycho criminals have been imprisoned in a world full of malevolent, mutant miscreants. The man responsible for this demonic

incarceration is a sad Elvis wannabe with a black-hole for a belly. The reason for this act? Well, it's just a test really, to see if the poor crims can make it through the dungeons to find FUB (the evil one) and possibly freedom...

You take the role of one of the six warped individuals. These guys are like something out of a freak show. Worse!

Anyway, you must basically blast everything in sight, finding keys, progressing through the levels, collecting power-ups for you weapons, all the time minding your energy to make sure you stay alive. The game plays from an overhead viewpoint, kinda like that old classic *Gauntlet*, but instead we have wondrous 3D graphics courtesy of the PlayStation. The levels are incredibly detailed and the graphical effects are superb. For example when shooting, the fire from your weapon even lights up the surrounding area, and some of the special effects on the 'smart bomb' weapons such as the ripple-quake, are really very impressive.

To add extra mayhem to the game, *Loaded* features some rather charged soundtracks to spur you on in your kamikaze mission. *Pop Will Eat Itself* feature as well as other artists, which will please many indie fans, but thrashy music won't be everybody's taste.

Curiously though, the noise pollution adds a more maniacal mood to the whole game – in fact, wasting a gaggle of nasties to the ear-piercing thrash/indie/rock is, I have to admit, actually rather err... fun.

Playing *Loaded* is a great way to unleash tension. Blasting the living daylight out of everything that moves,

and even inanimate objects, is very therapeutic, after a hard day in the *Play* office. The game really comes into its own when you play in two player mode, though. This adds to the strategic element somewhat, allowing you to employ cunning tactics to take on some of the harder baddies (or should

that be goodies?). *Loaded* also has a four player mode which is enabled when two PlayStations are connected via the serial link-up option. Playing in this mode can get rather confusing with so much happening on the screen at once and everyone blasting away simultaneously, but this adds perfectly to the complete deranged chaos that *Loaded* already is.

The thing with *Loaded* is the fact that there is little variation in gameplay. This can be a good thing in some ways, but after spending some time on the game, it does start to lose its instant appeal.

The rules are few and the action is hot

Are these guys psycho or what?

Loaded is full of deviants. Not least of all the characters you choose from...

Butch

Butch is a wierd guy. With no wardrobe of his own, this guy is prone to cross-dressing. Butch means business. He carries a flame thrower. Mess with him and you mess wjth fire...



Vox

Vox is a bit of a vixen. She can turn around your desire and destroy you with the power of your own adoration for her. Most definitely a callous female, not to be messed with.



Fwank

Fwank? This guy is incredibly warped. All he cares about is his teddy bear. Stand in his way and you're destined for demonic destruction. And he don't care one leetle bit.



ad

▼ Rats, we're cornered! It's feeding time for the FUB reconnaissance rodent team.



▼ Lighting effects are awesome, but Fwank is more worried about scorching his frock!



It is an easily accessible game, especially with the variable difficulty settings, but can still get a little monotonous. This is more of a criticism of the single player mode, though. In the multi-player modes, the game has an extra appeal as you blast things to high heaven with an ally or three. But saying that, *Loaded* is an immensely playable game, and definitely worth a look.



PLAY verdict

Looks:
 Sounds:
 Artillery:
 Value:

Played 85%
 Big, bad blasting action

Cap 'n' hands

Piracy is Cap 'n' Hands game. This guy is ruthless. Either you're on his side or you're not. Personally, I'd rather not mess with him – he's got more than a bit of an attitude problem.



Mamma

Mamma sounds like a bit of a cry baby, and he is. Related to a simian somewhere along the line, this creature is a rather large infant with absolutely no manners, but lots of animal instinct.



Bounca

Somewhat characteristic of a burly door person at a nightclub, Bounca has experience loads, but learnt nothing. There's no point at all in trying to reason with this guy.



3D

Green haired moppet-massacring mayhem? It can only mean the return of them loveable Lemmings. Play reaches for the Nuke-'em icon.

Lemmings

What's short, green haired, stupid and suicidal? yep, Lemmings, and they're back to run riot on the next generation consoles.

They're more annoying than ever, but sadly that's not good news.

It's a *Lemmings* game – y'know assign tasks, solve puzzles, prevent massacres. It's been tweaked a little gameplay-wise, but the real change here is the view. As the title says, this is *Lemmings* in 3D and this means the option to enjoy zooming in, rotating around and all but flipping the action upside down.

Quite who devised this devilish concept is anyone's guess, but if it sounded good on paper, it falls flat on its arse in practice.

The main problem with *3D Lemmings* is that the gameplay is drowned in over-exuberant graphics which add confusion, rather than an extra dimension, to the complexity. The end result is that you spend as much time worrying about which angle to view the next problem from, than actually tackling the

immediate problem itself.

At the end of the day, *3D Lemmings* is mutton dressed as lamb, or an ageing Hollywood starlet who splashes out on the silicone and the plastic surgery to hide the fact she's the same old haggard tart of many years before – which is *3D Lemmings* in a nutshell.

One thing you can say in its favour, is that it is one tough game. There are hundreds of levels to conquer, which is great, if you like being driven near insane, that is. And, to be fair, there are die-hard *Lemmings* nuts who will probably get a lot out of this

The rest of us though, will enjoy the graphics and the chipmunk-style samples for a while but find that it soon becomes too much and you start to crave for the simpler things in life like chocolate cake, *Baywatch* and most of all, the original *Lemmings*.



▲ Ever wondered what an extreme close up of a Lemming looks like?

▼ What a result, only one solitary Lemming kicked the bucket – poor sod



PLAY 
information

- Publisher: Sony Interactive
- Customer support: 0151 282 3333
- Expected price: £44.99
- Expected when: Out Now



▲ No, this isn't a stark portrait of a World War II Lemming concentration camp. The little blighters are just receiving orders from their fat-bottomed commandant.



PLAY 
verdict

Looks:	
Sounds:	
Challenge:	
Value:	

Played 69%
Nice idea, but not for me

Theme Park



PLAY information

- Publisher: Bullfrog/EA
- Customer support: 01753 546 465
- Expected price: £40-£45
- Expected when: October

Life's meant to be just one big roller coaster, innit? Play discovers there's more ups than downs when you make your very own theme park...

Ever wanted to try that rather large roller-coaster in Blackpool? Too scared? *Play* is here to save the day. We have the first roller-coaster simulator. Well nearly. What we do have here is *Theme Park*, a fiendishly fun and addictive simulation based around building and managing your very own amusement park.

You start by purchasing a piece of land around the world, upon which it is your task to set up your own theme park. The idea is cunningly simple, but beneath *Theme Park*'s sugary exterior lies an incredibly sophisticated game. This game isn't just a case of building a few rides for the kids, rather, you must juggle together a whole host of things, even coke stands, staff and where to put the toilets! And maybe make sure it's better than those of all your rivals.

In your park, it's the little people that are important. First rule of business: always look after the little people. They're important because the speech bubbles floating up from their heads actually provide invaluable feedback on just how you're doing.

Apart from looking after the kids, you also have manage your workforce, including mechanics and even guards to stop naughty thugs who start harassing the children. However, it's not all business, there is some fun – good job really. On the PlayStation, *Theme Park* even lets you wander around your site, and you get to try the rides out in some cute full-motion-video clips.

The management aspects of the game are easily accessible, but not too easy, especially as things get more complex early on. Ultimately, *Theme Park* is a rewarding and enjoyable game.



▲ Dogs aren't banned in this Theme Park. Better carry a brown bag though.

DAY	DETAILS	OUT	IN	BALANCE
7 FEB	HIRE STAFF	50		149,753
14 FEB	PURCHASE RIDE	2,000		147,753
21 FEB	HIRE STAFF	100		147,653
28 FEB	MONTHLY KATE TAXIDOC		450	148,103
7 MAR	MONTHLY SHIP TAXIDOC		25	148,128
14 MAR	INTEREST PAID	150		147,978
21 MAR	PURCHASE SHOP	197		147,781
28 MAR	HIRE STAFF	2,000		145,781
4 APR	MONTHLY KATE TAXIDOC		450	146,231
11 APR	MONTHLY SHIP TAXIDOC		150	146,381
18 APR	INTEREST PAID	400		145,981
25 APR	LOAD REPAID	197		145,784
2 APR	LOAD TAKEN OUT	50,000		95,784
14 APR	LOAD REPAID	150,000		95,784
BALANCE		95,534		



UNITED KINGDOM	
COST :	0
DIFFICULTY :	EASY
LOCAL POPULATION :	55,000,000
MEDIUM POPULATION :	150,000,000
LONG POPULATION :	300,000,000
INFLATION RATE :	4.00%
INTEREST RATE :	4.75%
ECONOMY :	FIXED
TAX FREE PERIOD YEARS :	3
LAND TAX :	20.00
WHO :	EMPTY

PLAY verdict

Looks:

Sounds:

Dinkyness:

Value:

Played 86%
 More fun than Thorpe Park



He's on fire!!! Asam Ahmad dribbles, dummies and dunks over the latest and greatest incarnation of the classic basketball game.

NBA Jam

Dribble. You wanna play basketball? You sure? Be warned. This is the hottest, fastest, meanest basketball game on any home system. This game is so hot, you'll have to wear gloves to stop the CD singeing your hands as you dunk it into your unsuspecting console.

NBA Jam T.E. on the PlayStation is a near perfect conversion of the arcade classic, and if you've played that then you'll know that this game is a must for your games collection.

If you haven't, and you don't mind annoying a few mates over this game then buy it – it's one serious game in head-to-head two player mode!

NBA Jam was a classic, a fast action two-on-two basketball game requiring the type of quick thinking, slick hand-eye co-ordination that normally disappears for ever when you discover the wonders of beer.

The *Tournament Edition* builds on the previous version to create a much more varied game, with several new in-game features. There are over 100 NBA superstars, with full digitised graphics, spread over 27 teams. The play options allow you to play in Team Mode where you can play with a friend, on the same team that is, or the best option, Head to Head, when you pit your wits and your strength, against each other.

Dummy. Apart from the standard objective to score baskets, in order to get the best from this game, collecting

◀ Oi! Matey! There are two nine point Hot-Spots on the court! You're on the wrong side. Don't you know how to play this game. I dunno...



▲ Aha! Boo. I'm losing. Dammit. Well at least there are some nice full-motion video clips to tell me so. Lovely.



various power-ups that are randomly strewn across the court is essential. Collecting these give you better player attributes, such as speed, power, stealing ability, blocking ability and dunking power. Occasionally, stars (the pointy kind) will turn up on the court with a number in it. The stars represent court Hot-Spots, which when successfully shot from, score the number of points on the star. Beat your opponent with an eight-pointer ten seconds from the end and you better brace yourself against very possible violent retaliation from

your incensed opponents.

Cross-Court Slam? Monster Jam? Yup, these are some of the dunks available for those super-turbo moves. Turbo

moves allow you to speed across the court at breakneck speeds and slam-dunk that ball. Get three baskets in a row, without anyone else scoring, and you're on 'fire'. Being on fire means that your player attributes increase, so all your shots are more accurate, and you can run even faster. Stay on fire as

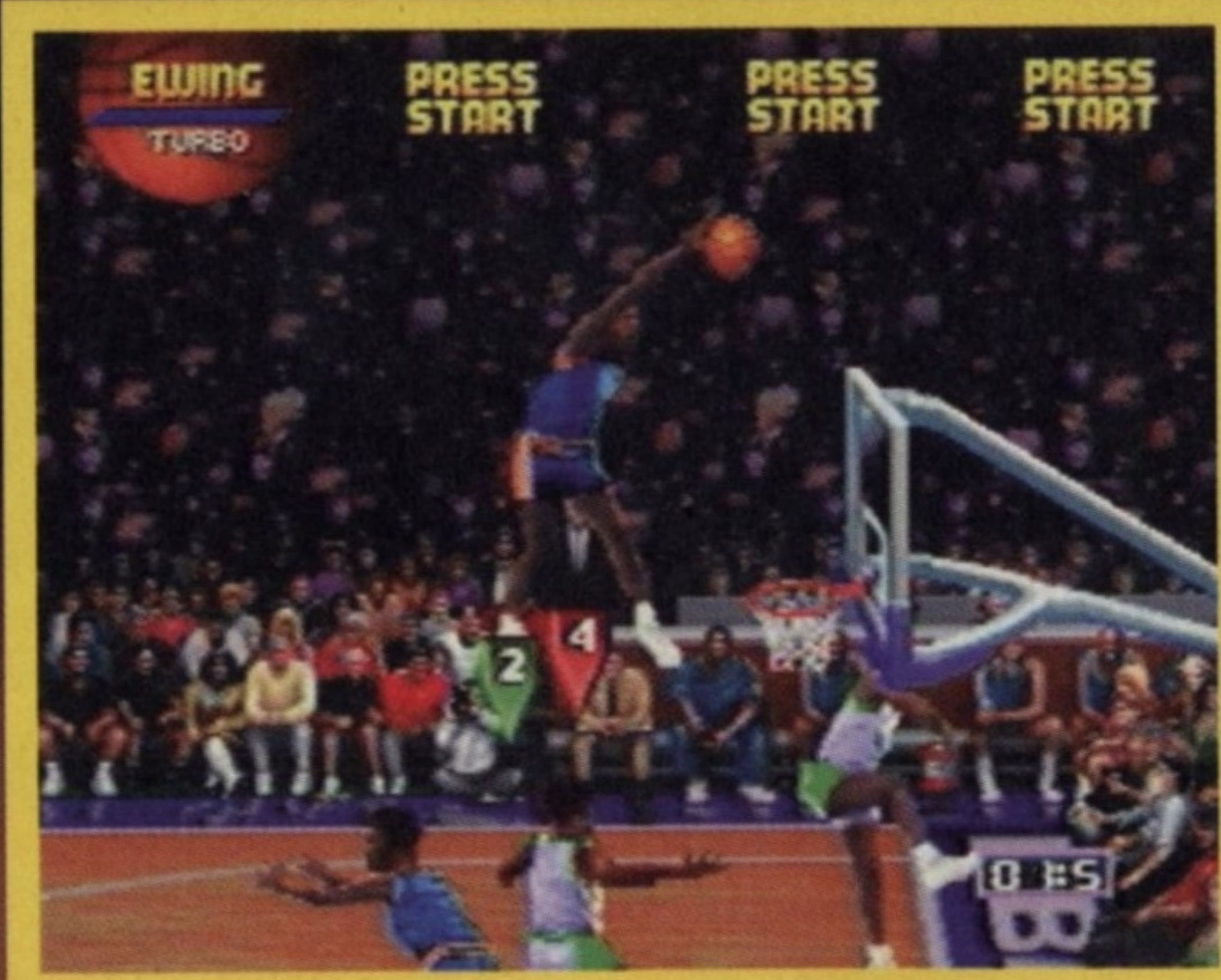
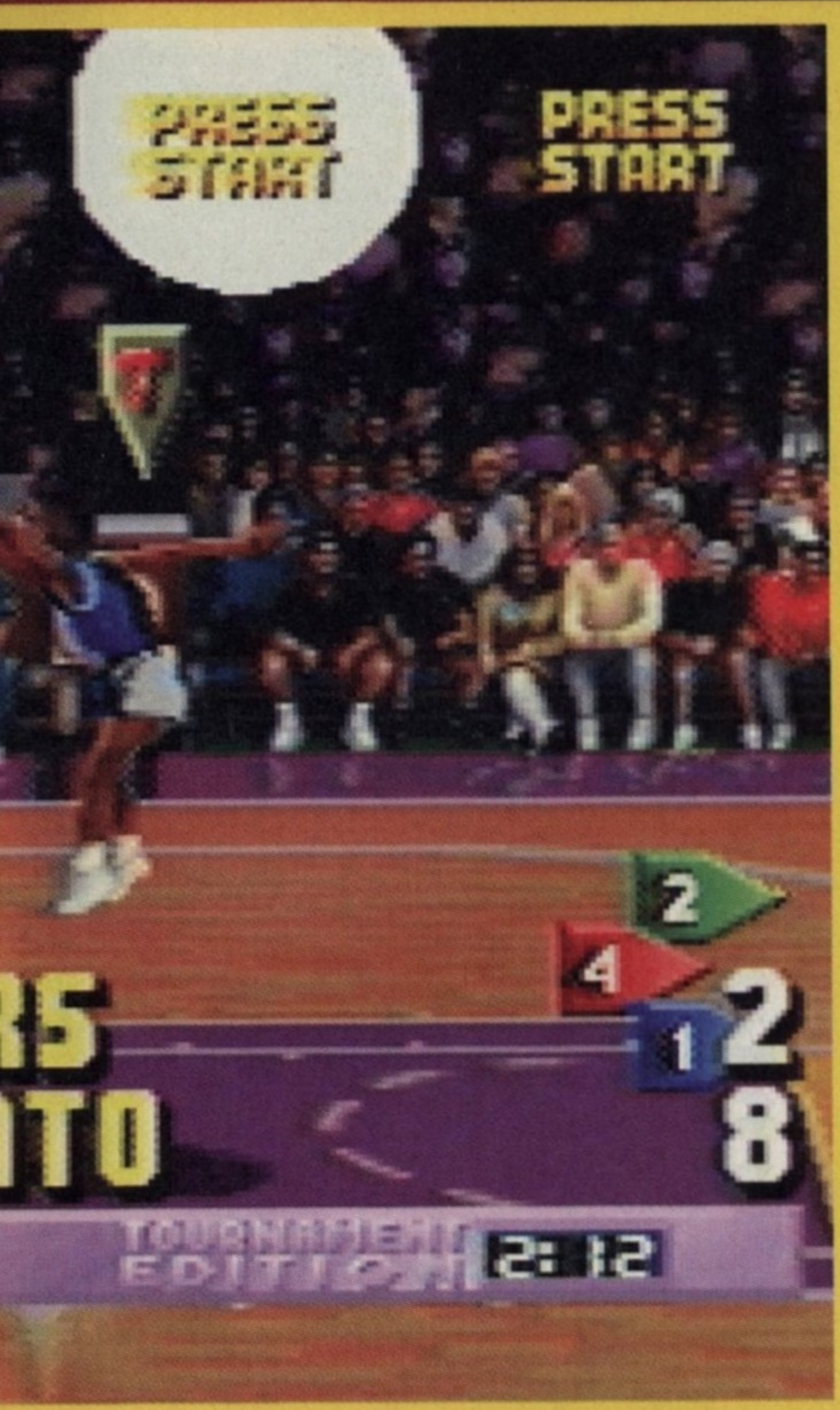
long as possible to quickly notch up baskets against your opponent.

Dunk! *NBA Jam T.E.* is a good-

I can't fault it from the coin-op

PLAY information

- Publisher: Acclaim
- Customer support: 0171 344 5000
- Expected price: £39.99
- Expected when: Out Now



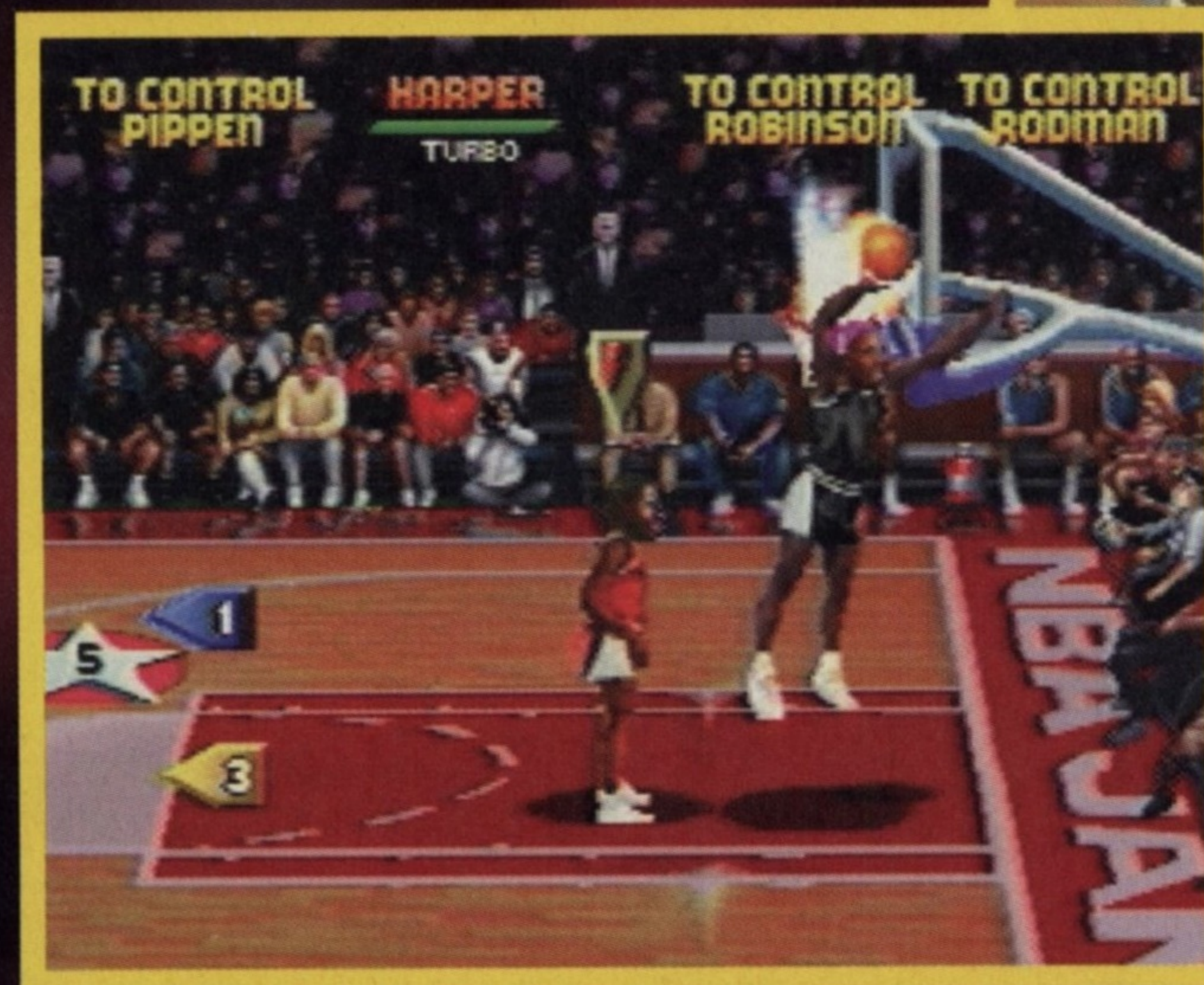
▲ Get dunkin' with some real acrobatic aeronautics. Slam on the turbo and watch your men go.



▲ This is no time for a gymnastics demonstration. Just score the ball will you please Mr Ewing?!



▲ He's on fire! Shoulda scored from that six point Hot-Spot though, that would have really clinched the game.



PLAY+ verdict

Looks:
 Sounds:
 Head size:
 Value:

Played 90%
 Sorted Speedy Sporty Sim

looking, fast-flowing full action game. Sometimes, the it can be a little difficult to keep track of, what with the power-ups and Hot-Spots, and sheer speed. Spend time playing it, however, and it soon becomes more accessible. If you don't like the power-ups and Hot-Spots options, you can turn them all off in the Tournament mode, to leave you with just the very basic basketball game.

This PlayStation version is superb, and I can't fault it from the coin-op. It has big digitised player heads so you can see who your player is and the commentary actually announces who has the ball! Those of you who aren't avid sports fans might not like *NBA Jam T.E.* as it's not the kind of game you can instantly master. However, to add a little variety to your collection, this game is definitely worth a look. Basketball fans will love it.

► 'X' marks the spot, or rather whereabouts the ball is going to land.

The PlayStation's latest signing is showing aggression, passion, class and top commitment. But does Ryan Butt think it plays a blinder?

► There are a multitude of different views to experiment with.

PLAY+ information

- Publisher: Warner Interactive Entertainment
- Customer support: 0171 391 4318
- Expected price: £40-£45
- Expected when: November 11th



▲ An Italian leaps in vain to block an exceedingly long shot from the young, nimble Cameroon wizard.

The best control system we've seen

Striker

With only Konami's commendable *Goal Storm* to out fox, it wasn't exactly the competition of competitions as far as establishing the best of the bunch, but after playing *Striker '96* solidly for days on end I got the impression that it's going to take something pretty damn spectacular to tarnish its reputation.

I remember playing the speedy, yet incredibly jerky 3DO version days before the PlayStation version emerged and thinking "What a load of old doggie's excrement!" As a result my hopes for this to become the definitive PlayStation footy game weren't high. Some hasty loading later and it was a completely different picture, for I had become a drooling foul-mouthed junkie whose fix consisted entirely of obliterating allcomers on this marvellous new game.

All the traits of the 16-bit original are

here, albeit virtually unrecognisable beneath the fantastically lavish upgraded presentation.

Options are plentiful and offer the usual assortment of tournaments and cup games. Depending on your selection you then go on to pick one of literally hundreds of teams (complete with real, albeit slightly altered player names) and match options. Time, weather and pitch surface are all negotiable depending on your preferences, and there is even a quick start option if you can't be bothered with all the hassle.

The game's only real glitch then rears its ugly head – it isn't quite so apparent in the first few games but after that you'll curse its very existence, and that is the long loading sequences. Those itching to get straight into the action will be left staring at the *Striker '96* logo for a minute

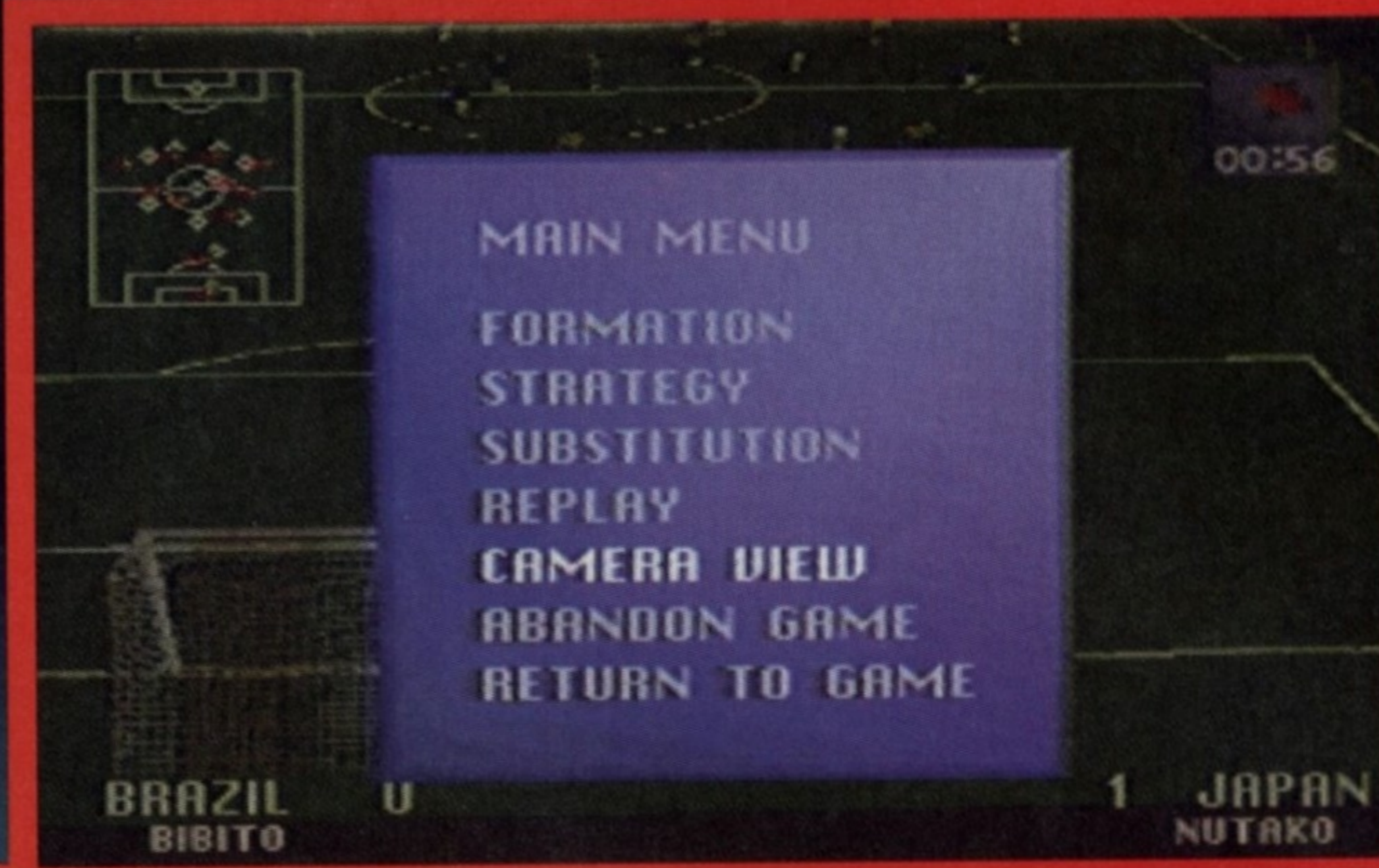


B

lam! Whoosh! It's in the net! The competition was

scarce but *Striker '96* has done the necessary to instantly become the PlayStation football champ.

It's hardly surprising though, just look at it – if the sizzling looks don't boot you into touch then the fabulously fluid gameplay is bound to get you going.



▲ The mid-match options allow you to rework your game.

Ram! Bam! Thank you ma'am!

Although the original game boasted fantastically fast and frantic soccer action, the most novel aspect was the five-a-side indoor games that were twice as fast and brilliantly unpredictable due to the rebounds and the fact that the ball could never go out of play. Well, what *Striker* game worthy of the name could be complete without it? Whilst messing around with the options we found this very one tucked away in *Striker '96* and it plays better than ever. So if you've mastered all there is to learn in the great outdoors, get yer plimsolls on and take to the wooden-tiled indoor pitch. If you thought it was hectic in the open, you ain't seen nothing yet!



▲ As Andy would say "Och! It's a fantastic Goal! The goalie never stood a chance."

PLAY verdict

Looks:
 Sounds:
 Hoofability:
 Value:

Played 89%
 Can you kick it? Yes you can.

6

or so before the game kicks off – it sounds petty but it is a pain in the arse! No detail has been spared to ensure that the maximum football experience prevails and for their sins, *Rage* even allow you to see the players emerging from the tunnels, their pre-match kick abouts and if you're really keen you can even listen to the national anthems – any sane individuals can be spared of these somewhat dubious bonuses though. Once the games kick off, anything is possible. Four different kinds of kick can be accessed as well as curvy aftertouch with the strength determined by power bars. Even dirty players can get their kicks from the various yobbish traits including straightforward sliding tackles and Cantona-style lunging kung-fu kicks that have the potential to take out about five players at once. Resorting to these drastic measures

usually results in severe reprimand from the eagle-eyed ref, who, if timed correctly can be taken out by a well-placed shot. Unlike the original *Striker*, scoring isn't a predictable affair, the real scorers come with skill and crackerjack timing. The way in which the pitch is viewed, and the fact that the scrolling is silky smooth and ultra fast, means that the action seldom lets up for air. The product is lovingly polished off with an array of different camera angles and on the spot commentary courtesy of football guru Andy Grey, who contributes such audio delights as "Och! That was a crunching tackle!" and "Oh what a magnificent effort!" Nice one Andy! So the big question now, is it console footy perfection? Pretty damn close matey. Obviously there is a lot to come but until that time, *Striker '96* rules OK!



Ace Combat

PLAY information

- Publisher: Namco/Sony
- Customer support: 0881 505 505*
- Expected price: £44.99
- Expected when: Now (Import) October (Official)

Info-freako flight sims are history. Inaccessible, gobbledygook manuals and incomprehensible control systems no more! Play bears witness to the re-birth of the combat flight sim, Ace Combat.

With PC-based flight sims you get double the trouble. Not only the fun of system configuration but also the joy of having to wade through a doorstep-thick manual and a maze of key controls before being able to play to a reasonable level. The Namco-designed *Ace Combat* nukes this approach, thank God, and is instantly accessible. It may not be as realistic as other flight sims, but it is a hell of a lot more enjoyable for those who are more interested in missiles than manuals.

After all the usual stuff, choose plane, get briefing, etc., etc., it's shooting things time. And it's fun, for a while. There are precious few options to master – a map, guns, missiles and your throttle, and it certainly looks good, although in more of a cute girl down the pub way rather than in a mind-blowing *Baywatch* star in dodgy *Penthouse* pics special (ahem). And to help out there's a co-pilot to give you signals about incoming missiles, whereabouts of another craft and your all-important altitude level.

All well and good. But here's the catch, it's just a bit too simple, y'know, fly from A to B, shoot C and D, dodge E

and hear the words 'mission accomplished'. True, on later levels it's more a case of fly from A to B, shoot C, D, E, and F, dodge G and H and hear the words 'mission accomplished' but, well, it's all a bit 80s isn't it? Hey, it's great that it's easy to get into, but couldn't there have been a bit more to, well, get into?

Adding insult to injury, the split-screen two player option detracts from the game's good points – the looks. Shame really, *Ace Combat* is a massively good game that didn't actually get to happen. Roll on *Ace Combat 2*.



▲ Bingo, you've just scored a hit on those enemy scum. Make sure you release another to make him go down!

▼ Yet another deadly missile is ready to be released. That red target will make the missile lock onto the aircraft.



PLAY verdict

Looks: ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒
 Sounds: ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒
 Variety: ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒
 Value: ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒

Played 79%
 Playable yes, fun um...

How next gen do you expect your next gen games to be? Do you want 3D polygons and arcade perfect racers, or do you want lame old 2D shoot 'em-ups that look like SNES rejects? If the latter appeals to you then *Rapid Reload* is right up your crevice. Lacking anything even remotely resembling next gen, we ask ourselves "Who would possibly buy a game like this?"

If the truth be known though, behind this dust ridden, cobweb-strewn exterior lurks the kind of sweat-inducing action that made shoot 'em-ups a national institution oh so many years ago, and this is something of a rebirth. Do stress the 'something' though.

The action centres around two young anime-style scamps, Axel and Ruka, who're out to uncover the truth behind a sacred stone, and why evil forces are desperately trying to obtain it. Even though they look no more than 12 years of age, both wield an unsightly arsenal of firepower which rips through anything that dares venture onto the screen within seconds. With their guns and attitude, Axel and Ruka must storm through six stages to confront the boss of all bosses. See, it even sounds like a SNES game, doesn't it?

Graphically this game is years behind its PlayStation counterparts. Hey, it's a 2D shoot 'em-up after all, but don't let this necessarily put you off. *Rapid Reload* boasts fast, frenetic gameplay. The variety and ferocity of the firepower makes for compulsive maiming action, and even if the levels aren't the most varied ever seen in a shoot 'em-up, they offer enough challenge to keep the gamer gripped. Trouble is, there's only so much of the grip to last a few days. Longevity is a problem, and is probably just enough of one to stop us recommending this to anyone but the most avid shoot'em-up nut. Unless, of course, you've just won the lottery in which case snap up a copy today.

Rapid Reload

PLAY information

Publisher: Sony
Customer support: 0881 505 505*
Expected price: £39.99
Expected when: Now

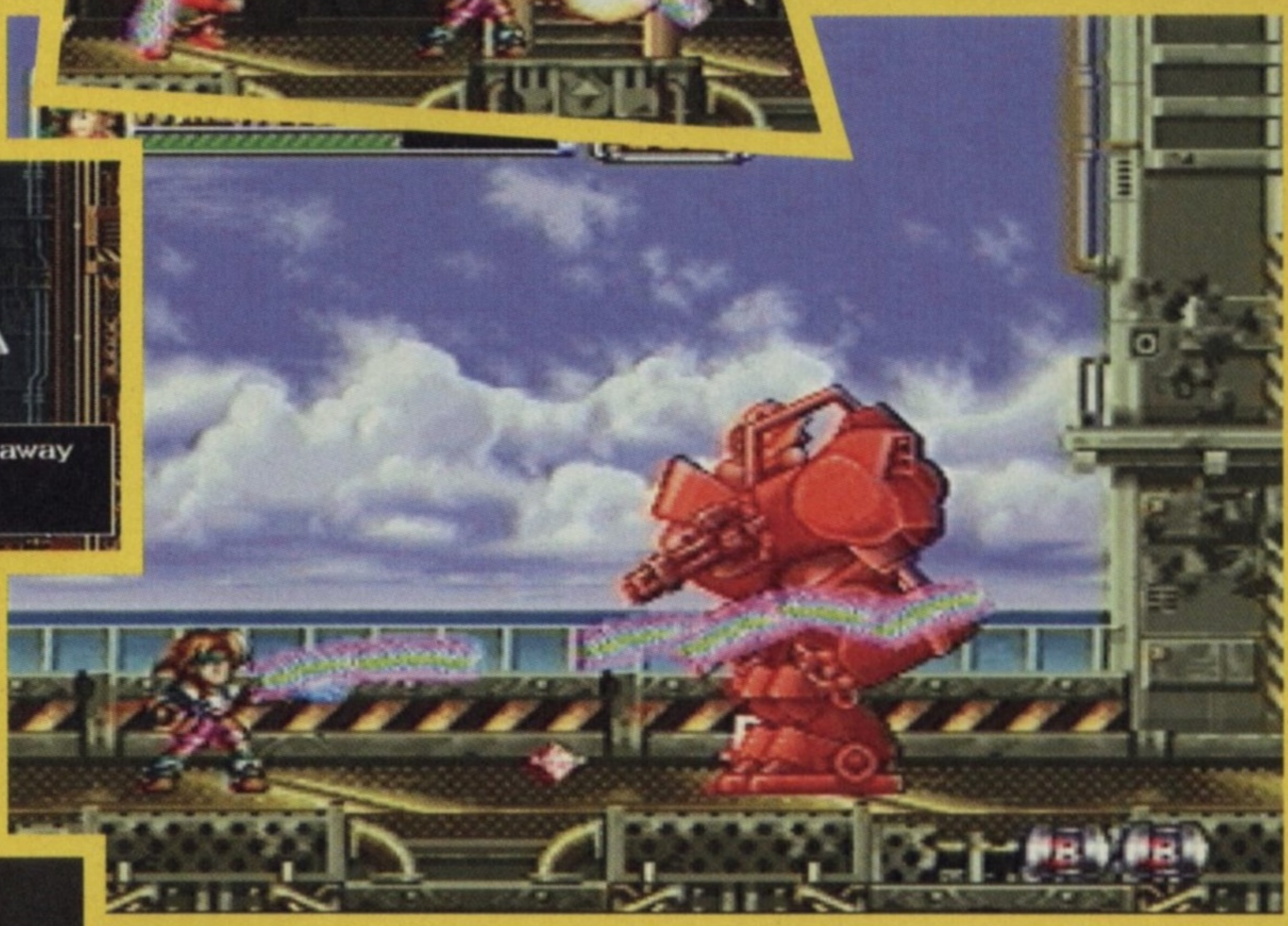
More guns than *Terminator* and bigger explosions than *Die Hard*, does *Play* have a winner on its hands?



▲ The first guardian comes in the form of this patriotic robo-Knight. Frightening!



▼ Captured on film, the first evidence that ideas for next-gen games are already running scarce. Behold, the dreaded mine cart level.



PLAY verdict

Looks: ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒
Sounds: ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒
Ferocity: ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒
Value: ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒

Played 71%
Could use a rapid rethink

Wipeout

Ryan Butt has his adrenaline pumped, his heartbeat-raced and his breakfast vertically-challenged by Sony's screaming new racer, *Wipeout*

PLAY information

● **Publisher:** Sony Interactive
● **Customer support:** 0151 2823333
● **Expected price:** £40-45
● **Expected when:** Out now

▼ **With a nitro boost on standby, this tunnel seems a likely place to overtake.**



Wipeout has no room for personality-challenged Mansell and Hill-wannabes, just for speed-driven speed-freaks who understand that swooping past the chequered flag in first place cannot always be achieved by going strictly by the book. Forget wheels, hell, forget *Ridge Racer*, to tune in to Sony Interactive's (they used to be Psygnosis for those who are interested) unit-shifting show-stopper, think futuristic, think anti-gravity racing, and more importantly, think guns. This is mad, bad, fast and dangerous to love, and love it you will. It's an early PlayStation release (by the time you read this it should've been on sale for a good couple of weeks) but it's no rush job and the Liverpool lads couldn't have got off to a more spectacular start – *Wipeout* has all the elements needed to become an instant classic. It's like *F-Zero* on the SNES – groundbreaking – and shows just what the PlayStation can achieve. Actually, sod that thought, this is miles better.

The first thing that hits you about this

game is the speed – no game on any machine, not even Bullfrog's *Hi-Octane* on a top of the range Gateway 2000 P120 can match the immense velocity of this at full pelt.

Putting the drool cup away and getting down to the nuts and bolts (assuming you haven't already dropped the mag and rushed off down the shop) *Wipeout*

offers two racing categories to master. First up is the Venom class, which offers six extremely varied courses complete with jumps, tunnels, and split roads. You're up against seven rivals (evil sods they are too) and you must finish in the top three to progress. Do this, and you qualify to race in the major league Rapier class. The tracks on offer here are basically the same as in Venom except that the backdrops are slightly different and they're raced at double the speed – which, once you've played Venom, is a scary thing to comprehend. What, *twice* as quick? Getting to grips with the controls is a painstaking task – you're seemingly drawn towards the speed-hacking barriers like a child to dog muck at first. However, this isn't your average racer, and once you get your head around the craft's inertia and control system you'll stop screaming and start dribbling with lust again. For god's sake don't let it put you off, a bit of practice and you'll be

The first thing that hits you about this game is the speed

sorted. Actually, as far as practice goes, the Single Race and Time Trial options are a good bet, allowing a full choice of courses to kick in. Get the notebook out and start memorising the layout. Practising is always the boring option, but this is kind of game that makes you think about how to shred seconds off

your best times ready for championship competition (yes, even set fifty years into the future, race games are still based around championships.)

Very little can be said about the game's appearance apart from "Slap my bare buttocks with a wet kipper if that isn't the best looking PlayStation game to date!" These are the kind of super smooth graphics I'd happily dive under a train for if it weren't for the fact that Mystic Meg told me PlayStations are apparently very hard to come by 'on the other side'. Bummer, eh?

The high-paced cosmic trance experience is completed with the supersonic techno vibes, very kindly supplied by the likes of *Leftfield*, *Orbital* and *The Chemical Brothers*.

Ridge Racer has been out for ages on import and, well, compared to *WipeOut*, is beginning to look dated.

WipeOut is sophisticated and is eon-swallowingly challenging. It obliterates the competition. Hell, why not buy another PlayStation to link-up against a mate – I guarantee that you'll have more fun locked away with this than you would spilling pints down the pub on Karaoke night, even if it is somewhere like three times more expensive.



ut



▲ The first person perspective can be tricky to get to grips with – especially as it moves at twice the speed.

Bomb the buggers!

Whilst racing against the other competitors in *Wipeout*, you'll be able to acquire certain weapons by racing over the coloured pick-up points. Here are the various beef-ups you can use to enter into the realms of the sadists:



Shield – Temporarily protects against enemy attacks.



Turbo Boost – Gives the gamer a short burst of extra speed.



Mines – Lay these in the path of an enemy to slow them down.



Shock Waves – This will cause enemies to stall for a while.



Rockets – A straight projectile that causes your opponents to spin uncontrollably.



Missiles – Like the rockets except these have a heat seeking capability.

◀ Holy sh...! Sack the construction workers that skived on that road job! The worst is yet to come though.



▲ Bank left! Bank right! As you may have gathered, *Wipeout* is a game about serious risk taking with very little room for mistakes. Too much understeer on a corner could be costly.



PLAY verdict

Looks: ██████████
 Sounds: ██████████
 Speed: ██████████
 Value: ██████████

Played 94%
 Simply, better than *Ridge Racer*!

J-League Winning Eleven



PLAY information

- Publisher: Konami
- Customer support: 01895 653000
- Expected price: £69.99 (import)
- Expected when: Import out now

Best thing since International Superstar Soccer... or just a load of over-inflated balls? Ryan Butt takes to the field.

Few things in life are guaranteed, but Konami producing great soccer games is a racing cert... only thing is, we all know what that can mean – your ‘cert’ trailing home with its tail between its legs. Still, let’s give it a chance.

One thing is certain, whoever produces the first decent PlayStation football game is going to make a killing at the tills.

Konami, the makers of SNES mega hit *International Superstar Soccer*, are lining up an official UK version of *Winning Eleven*, called *Goal Storm*, for later in the year. When we found this out, it seemed like it could be the best discovery since Kevin Keegan saw David Ginola play.

So, hearts a flutter, we thought we’d take a close look at the Jap version. *Winning Eleven*, however, is no knockout. True it does pack a punch, but it’s the

E1even

kind of girly punch that wouldn’t even worry *Play’s* resident pugilist, Simon ‘glassjaw’ Lovell. And when the mist clears you think to yourself: “Hey, I could get better football from a SNES”.

What it is, is a full-on 3D polygon affair featuring players constructed out

of shapes running around a pitch that swivels around – and if that sounds confusing, well so’s the viewpoint employed. It’s not the kind of game to play with a hangover.

The action can be observed from three different perspectives (close and far angled overhead and a lower down side-on view), but the zoom ins and swirly effects come into force automatically. That’s it really, the rest is pure bladder-walloping action...kind of.

OK, this is where I start moaning. Admittedly, I had pretty high expectations, but I was still pissed off about this game not living up to them – and one of the reasons for that was the typically arcade feel to the play which makes for predictable methods of scoring and, worse still, results in the game turning

◀ With the choice of taking a long or short ball tension is mounting whether Grampus can capitalise on this corner.





▲ With the goalie wrong footed, the coast is clear to casually walk the ball into the net – talk about taking the piss!

en

into a midfield struggle of who can slide tackle the ball away the most. Wobbly graphics and unresponsive controls (you press shoot and a couple of seconds later your player obliges!)

It does get progressively better though, and once you conquer the arts of precision passing and after touch it all begins to come together smoothly and goals don't just come from corner-of-the-box blasts past the incredibly thick keepers. It isn't easy stuff to master, though, and during the eons I sat down playing the thing, I still couldn't fathom out how to head, bicycle kick or volley the ball, which became increasingly infuriating as the computer opponents were pulling off Pele-style moments of magic at every conceivable opportunity.

Winning Eleven offers the gamer the chance to compete in tournament and league games with one of the 14 J-League teams on offer, but these only prove to be challenging for the time it takes to

fully master the controls, after that, thrashing the living daylights out of a pal is the only enjoyment you'll derive from Konami's *Winning Eleven*.

As the first PlayStation soccer game, *Winning Eleven* sets standards for others to better – which they undoubtedly will. Enjoyable as it is, and it kind of is, this game definitely has noticeable flaws.

Get better football from a SNES

Will Winning Eleven Go Down A Storm?

However tempting it may be to rush out and snap up a copy of the first PlayStation footy game this instant, here, straight from the guys at Konami, are some reasons to hang onto your cash until *Goal Storm* arrives:

- ▶ Atmosphere freaks will marvel at the full-on sampled speech that surges into fever pitch when those blasts go souring towards the sticks.
- ▶ The obscure J-League teams will be replaced by a full international line-up featuring 26 teams from around the globe – bags Brazil!
- ▶ The feeble selection of team strategies will be replaced by those in the original *International Superstar Soccer*, which catered for all styles of play.
- ▶ Gooooaaaal! Relive those crowd-pleasing magic moments by having a fiddle with the brand new controllable replays. View those goals from any angle you so desire.



◀ With composure in tact, he strikes a blinder.

▶ Matey flies in with a tackle but mis-times it completely!



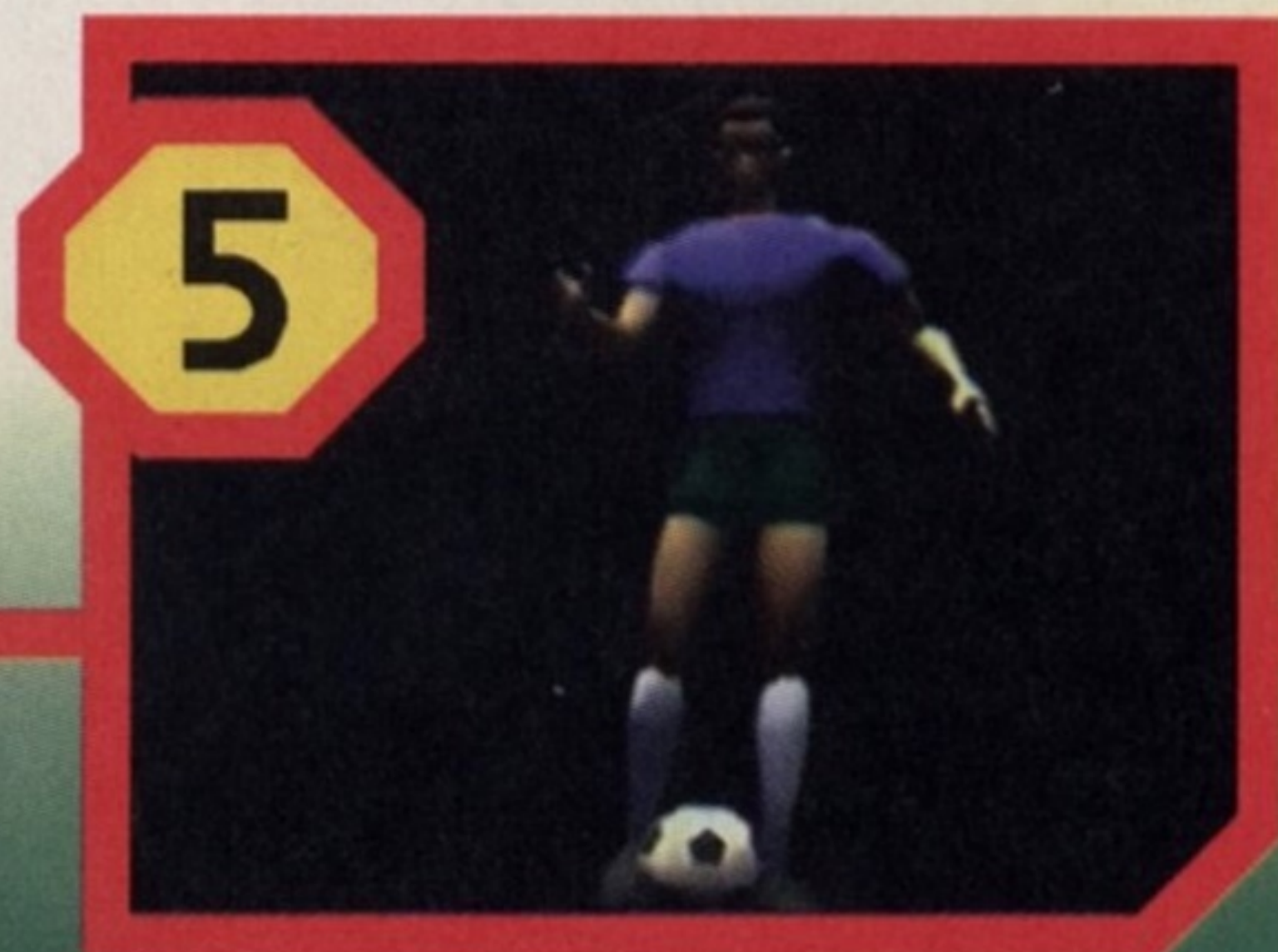
Top intro action!

Just to get you into a tip-top bladder-belting mood, *Winning Eleven* kicks off with a stunning intro featuring acrobatic players, and sizzling polygon animation. Check it out for yourselves people.

PLAY verdict

Looks:
 Sounds:
 Kickability:
 Value:

Played 73%
 Arcade soccer made difficult



Discworld

Cerebral adventure type Stephen Hill dons a silly hat and delves into the point & click
Discworld of Terry Pratchett, hero of the great unwashed and technical editors everywhere

PLAY information

- Publisher: Sony Interactive
- Customer support: 0151 282 3333
- Expected price: £39.99
- Expected when: October

▼ Get out from under that table and let me irritate you to death.

Discworld is a PC conversion, and it shows. You know, applying thought, solving puzzles and such like. The plot of the game is to guide a hapless wizard called Rincewind around some mythical land in pursuit of a fire-breathing dragon. Fine.

As for the game, well, the interface is intuitive enough, revolving around three basic commands – walk, action and examine. It's also a full talkie (with optional subtitles) and the main character is voiced by the suitably irritating Eric Idle. Rather than the time-honoured multiple choice sentence method, conversation is carried out by selecting what mood to adopt; whether it be pleasant, sarcastic (my favourite), inquisitive or just plain angry.

Graphically, *Discworld* is admittedly initially impressive, with the lush locations adding to the intended other-worldly feel. But on close examination, the lip-synching is far from perfect and certainly wouldn't look out of place in an episode of *Heidi*. Furthermore, many of the animations are very basic, some of them consisting of no more than four or five frames of movement. Also, when the dragon finally rears its scaly head, it is about as convincing as the titular creature in low budget horror flick, *Q – The Winged Serpent*.

But of course it's gameplay that counts and *Discworld* has plenty in its own way. It does take some patience



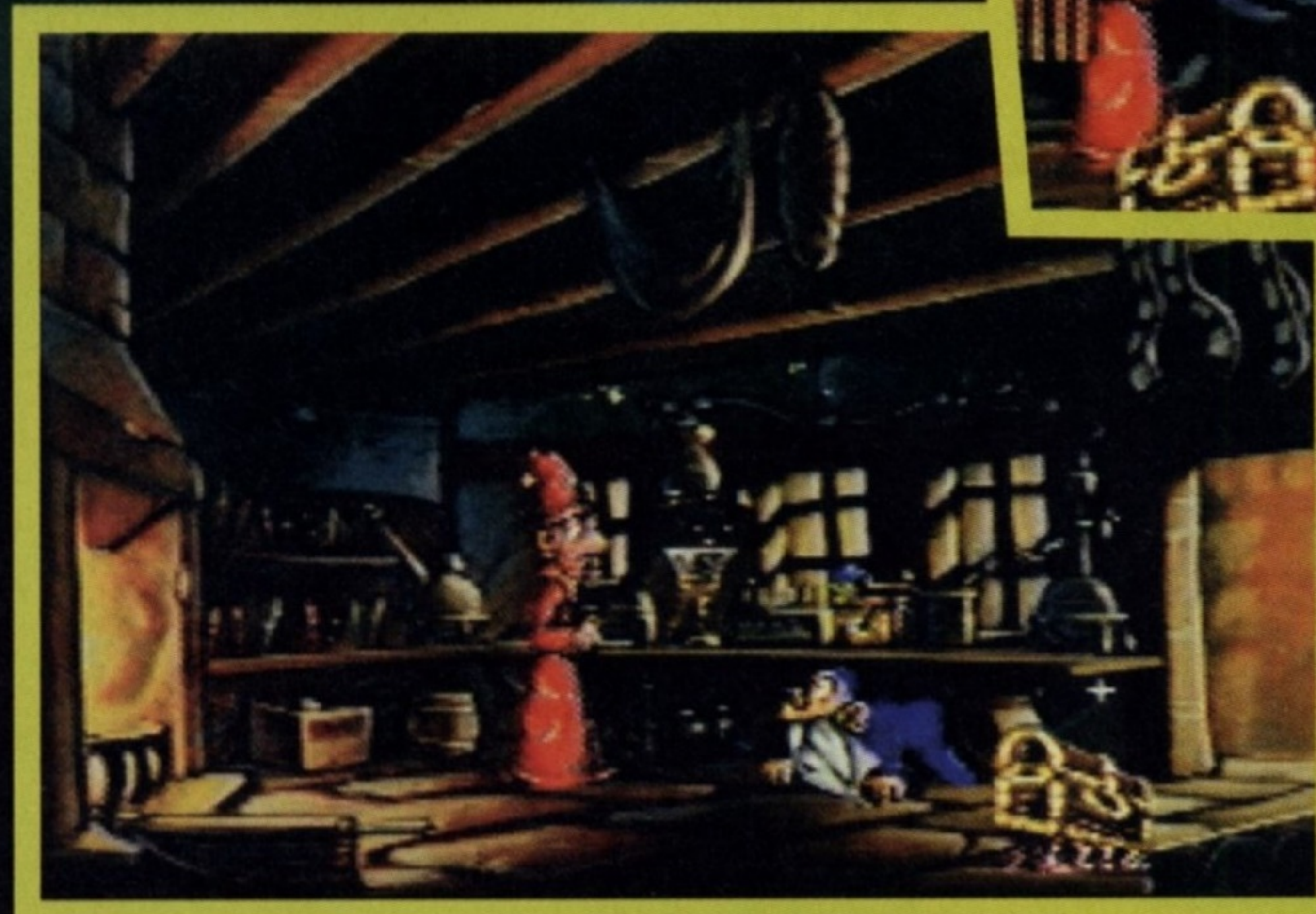
▲ Excuse me mate, could you spare us ten pence for a cup of tea?

though and being constantly told "that doesn't work" by Eric Idle is enough to make your teeth hurt. What it mainly lacks is a 'reveal' feature, both in the main game to highlight usable objects, and on the overhead map to identify all the other locations.

The game is packed with plenty of gibberish and in-jokes that will presumably make sense to fans of the books, although,

to be fair, it does appeal on its own merits. For those seeking a laid back, occasionally humorous adventure, *Discworld* is entertaining enough without being particularly exciting.

▼ Hello Miss! Unfortunately, Rincewind seems more interested in the stupid looking geezer in the stocks. Weirdo.



▲ Get Rincewind to jump off here to reveal a secret... nah, I'm making it up.

PLAY verdict

Looks:
 Sounds:
 Wackiness:
 Value:

Played 74%
 Just don't mention the monkey



PLAY+ information

- Publisher: Sony
- Customer support: 0881 505 505*
- Expected price: £44.99
- Expected when: Now

▼ It's one against one in the ultra thrill a minute Time Trial mode.

Ridge Racer

For the best racing game with wheels on...Play says play *Ridge Racer*.



OK, OK, so if you've read the *Wipeout* review (page 64, if you haven't) you'll know that we reckon it's got the edge on *Ridge Racer*. Shock, horror, tar us all with feathers etc.

Don't worry, the king of the arcades is still a prince amongst the £50 a time thieves sitting on the shelves marked 'PlayStation games', it's just that *Wipeout* is a speed monster (and there's also a two player option and more than one track, which helps).

Arcade-perfect? Ish. The chopper's in there but there are only two views not four and well, do you really actually care whether it's arcade perfect? We're talking small grey £300 box under the TV here, not massive great £3,000 coin-gobbling cabinet. And, well, it is anyway, near enough. Which is a good thing.

Regrets, regrets, or, rather, moans, grips, complaints, whines, grouses, grumbles, bitches – well yes, one sodding track! It doesn't matter how many little variations there are, backwards, forwards, mirrored tracks, whatever, it's still only one sodding track. And not adding in a two player option is unforgivable.

Options-wise, there's a choice of four

cars (12, if you produce a perfect completion of the intro game of Galaxians, plus the black car, if you're good enough to complete it all), four variants of the track and six sound tracks, but you can also whip the game CD out and put one of your own in (*Oasis* is good), which is by far the best way.

Also, if you've got one of those twisty Namco joypads, then this is the game for you. Without one, steering is a jab the car around jerkily in the right direction process; with one, steering is a smooth twisting of the grips. Top stuff.

And the game? Quibbles aside, it's fantastic.



PLAY+ verdict

Looks:
 Sounds:
 Twisty Pads:
 Value:

Played 93%
 Go on then, buy it!

PLAY⁺ information

● Publisher: Team 17
 ● Customer support: 01924 271637
 ● Expected price: £39.99
 ● Expected when: November



▲ OK Lads, eyes front and stand to attention, while I give you all stupid names.



The Gulf War? Bosnia? Kate Adie? They've got nothing on this. Asam Ahmad reports back from the front-line on hardcore warfare the wormy way...

This game is incredibly bad. Very, very, bad. My reasons for this instant assassination? If ever there was a game that could break up friendships, result in people abandoning their day-to-day work, split up couples, this is it. I can't stress quite enough how horribly evil this game is, dammit!

Worms is a mad game about a bunch of military worms that are hell-bent on killing. You take charge of a team of, err... worms. These are your little buddies, and your task is to use all the weapons at your disposal, ranging from homing missiles to sticks of dynamite and dragon punches, to basically annihilate your opposition. In single player mode, the appeal is rather limited,

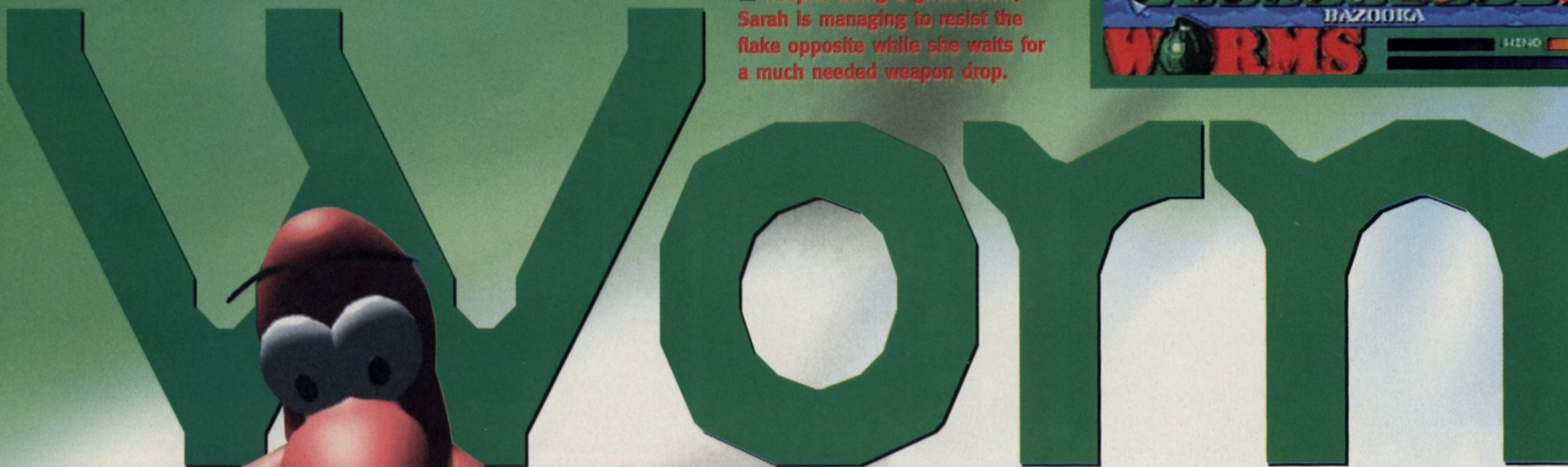
playing against the computer. It's not easy or hard, it's just that the computer doesn't really have much in the way of reaction to your strikes and as a result can be quite boring. However, add one or more (up to 16) players and you really do have one of the best, and most addictive strategic war games ever.

Worms is played over a massive range of randomly generated landscapes, with numerous hazards and obstacles littered all over the shop. This means that every

time you play the game, you are presented with the unknown. Your team of worms is randomly scattered around the landscape, often in ridiculous positions, but it is your task to navigate your worms into cunning positions that'll allow you to blast your opponent but leave yourself safe. This is often harder than it seems, making the game incredibly hilarious on occasions as your devious plans often backfire, leaving you with your own worms maimed or killed.



▲ Despite being a girlie worm, Sarah is managing to resist the flake opposite while she waits for a much needed weapon drop.



a devious game of wits

The worms have cute squeaky voices, making them very endearing. Hearing them shout "stupid" when you manage to injure them is hilarious. This adds to the cuteness of the game. The graphics, despite being small, are perfectly drawn. Not since the original *Lemmings*, have so few pixels enamoured so many. There are also several fully rendered intro sequences which comically show the end results of your possible attacks.

The main thing about this game is that it's not so much the worms you are playing with, rather the other human players. As a result, this game turns into a devious game of wits. The strategic element is something that comes after playing for a little while, but you can also configure your weapons so that you can alter the emphasis of the gameplay. The time limit you have to make your move can also be changed, altering the whole approach to the game. Choosing which weapon to use and aiming it properly involves a bit of thinking though – so, take too long and you'll be taken out of contention as you miss your ever vital turn.

Worms, ultimately, is a brilliant game. Not for what it actually is, but for how it plays. The idea is incredibly simple, but the way in which it is executed allows for unlimited variation in gameplay. Playing with a group of people is definitely recommend, as in the *Play* office, where endless hours have been spent, er, reviewing the game. But be warned though, tempers can get more than a little bit frayed as you annihilate your all your friends and colleagues with cunningly timed air strikes... People can be dead touchy at times – and about the smallest things!



▲ Ginger and Jasper manage to avoid a particularly nasty airstrike and remain with their health completely in tact.



▲ I see Phil is adopting his 'The Great Escape' method of surviving.

PLAY verdict

Looks:	■■■■■■■■■
Sounds:	■■■■■■■■■
Conflict:	■■■■■■■■■
Value:	■■■■■■■■■

Played 92%

Relentless wormy warfare action

How hard's your worm?

Are you cut out for some wormy warfare? This game Ain't for wimps. In order to wipe out your opposition you will, of course, need to master your weapons. There are several different categories, and you must use them all tactically.

Long range attack weapons

These are things like homing missiles, grenades, air strikes and cluster bombs. You only get a limited supply, so sometimes it's best to use them nearer the end of the game for a short sharp victory.

Short range attack weapons

Uzis, shotguns, fireballs and even sticks of dynamite can be used to good effect when in close proximity of the enemy. For close hand-to-hand combat you can even use dragon punches or simply prod the enemy off a useful overhang.

Yellow fella chicken moves

These are defensive moves to try and hide from your enemy, known in the *Play* office as a 'Phil King' (Phil is dep ed. of our sister mag, X•Gen.) Teleport away, dig into the ground or protect yourself with a girder. These kind of moves can be seen to be cowardly, but use them to good effect and you can secure victory.

Other curious manoeuvres

Need to find somewhere to position yourself more tactically? Try a ninja rope to swing into position, or perhaps use a cunning exploding sheep or a banana bomb to screw the opposition. Or, our fave, a kamikaze move that does an immense amount of damage, but ends up killing your worm as you fly head first through the scenery and off the screen!



Play is knocked out by this near-perfect boxing sim, but does a near-perfect boxing sim make for a near-perfect game?

Boxer's Road

PLAY+
information

- Publisher: Neu
- Customer support: No UK number
- Expected price: £59.99
- Expected when: Out now (import)

▼ A sparring partners-eye view of our boxer moving in for the kill. Grrr.

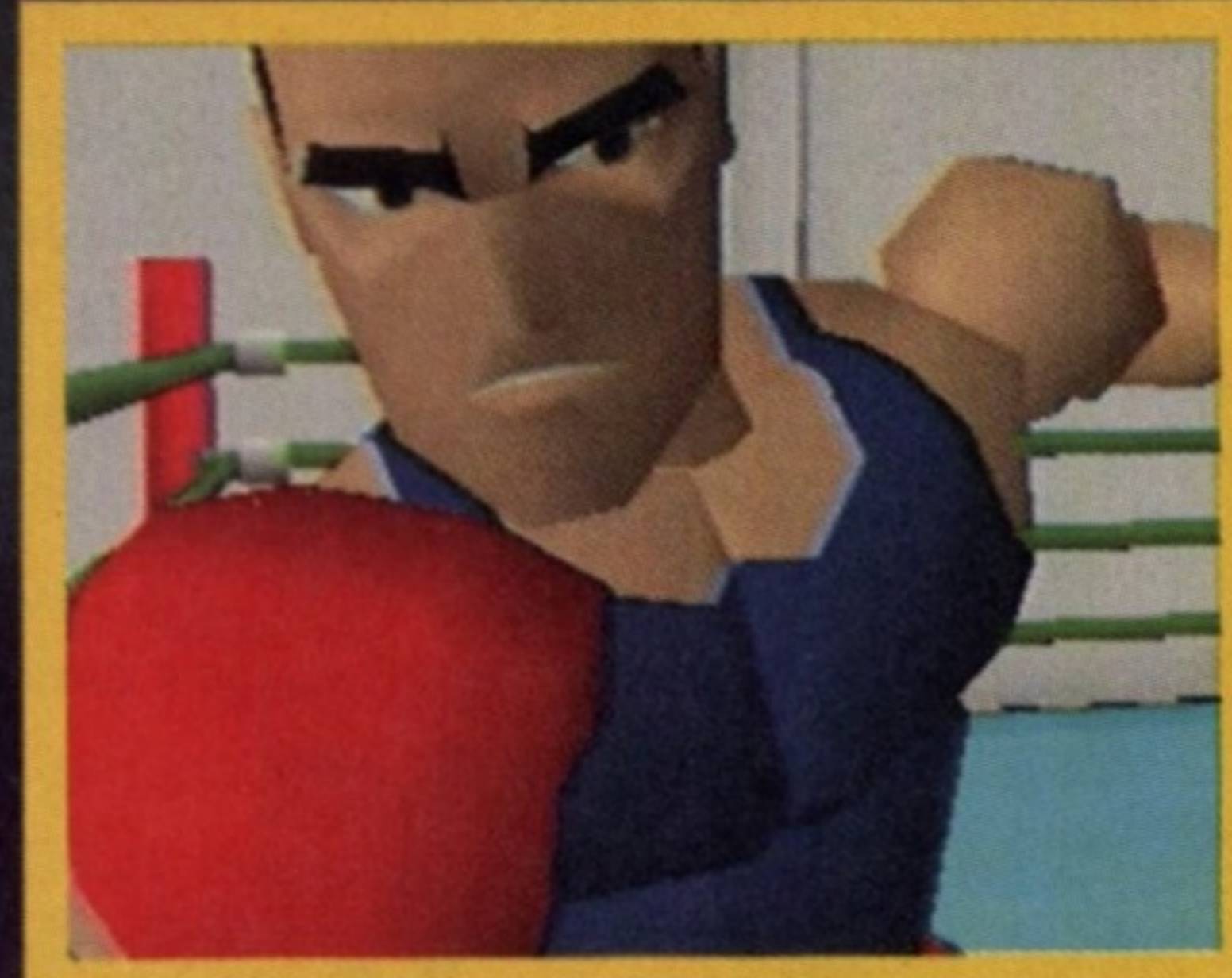
Sad, but true, no 16-bit boxing game was exactly anything you could call realistic. A bit of a laugh, maybe, but power bars bear little resemblance to pain thresholds and bloodied noses, and being able to see the end coming via some graphical device doesn't really make for the most thrilling simulation in the world.

In *Boxer's Road*, that simply isn't so. It's about as complete a simulation of boxing as you're going to get. Right down to the fact that when you go down, you get no warning, it's just, bang, land a stormer and watch the other guy crumple on the floor. To start off with you select the personal details of your boxer, setting height, blood group, hair style, age and then the computer generates your weight, slotting your slugger neatly into one of the many fighting classes. Then, through, plotting a

meal schedule and training plan you can build up your man's relative stats and even add a few pounds. Being a sim, there are more than a few stats to look after, including (deep breath) endurance, rush strength, sway speed, sharp power, heavy power, life(!), stamina, stamina rate, footwork speed, punch speed and tiredness. Phew, enough to keep even Mr Motivator on his toes. Training-wise you can opt for a combination of nine different sessions including interactive sparring. Training is important, for if you don't make the right weight, the computer won't let you fight. Screw up twice in a row and it retires you, which is bang out of order in our book.

As much attention has been paid to the in-ring action too, with all eight joystick buttons employed to allow jabs, hooks, crosses, upper cuts, dodges, sways, taunts and blocks. *Boxer's Road* has one of the best control systems we've ever seen, and as you can see from the shots, looks seriously impressive from whatever view you play it.

In the end though, it can either become a decent enough two player



▲ Honest, this is an in-game shot. The differing views in *Boxer's Road* are superb, although not always practical.



▲ A double-tap on the d-pad results in a quick sidestep, just like this in fact. Now, step in and bang him one.

punch up, or a time-intensive, one-player career slog that really eats into your time and eventually becomes more and more frustrating.

And really, on import, unless you speak Japanese, that's where *Boxer's Road* falls short of greatness.



▲ Ah, remember the days when all boxing games looked like this. Thank god for the PlayStation. (left) this view is one of the best against the computer.



PLAY+
verdict

Looks: ██████████
Sounds: ██████████
Accessibility: ██████████
Value: ██████████

Played 82%
Great game action, eventually

W

restling has never struck a cord in my heart, to me it's just a mass of over-inflated egos camping it up in a ring in front of an easily-amused audience. I used to think it was a serious sport until I actually sat down and watched a few matches only to discover that a bar-brawl in that classic *The Dukes of Hazard* looks much more convincing and altogether less staged.

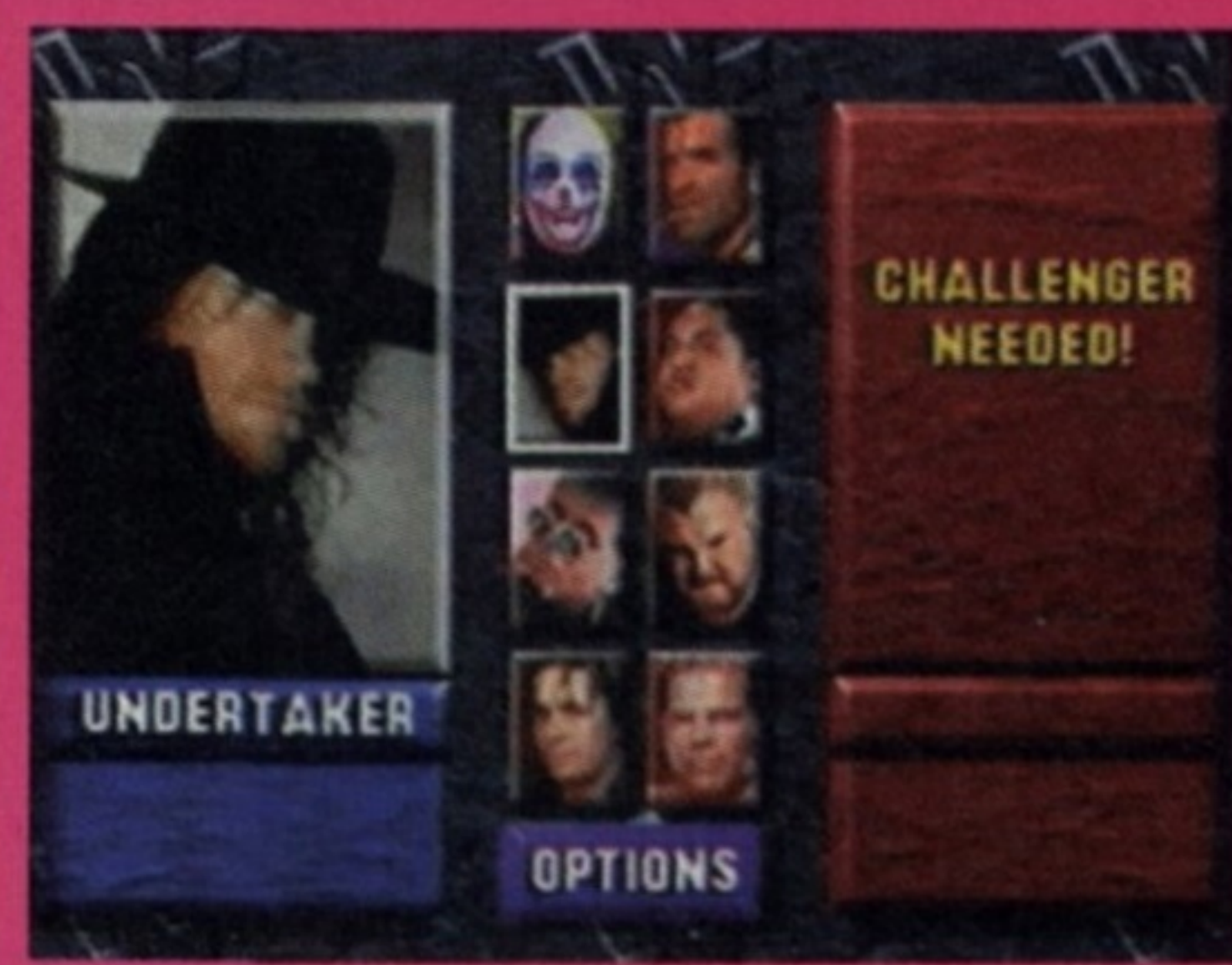
Acclaim's new *WWF Wrestlemania* coin-op conversion capitalises more on the over-the-top shenanigans rather than pretending that the action portrayed is actually real, which is probably why it's the best wrestling game to date, albeit still a bit flawed.

Taking on more of a traditional beat 'em-up feel complete with brutal punches, fireballs, and kicks, *Wrestlemania* makes for compulsive brawling action which consists of little more than smacking the crap out of your opponent with super moves and combos aplenty. However, the enjoyment doesn't last long and once the harsh reality hits home that this has been done and played to death before, the whole game collapses in front of you.

There are eight selectable panto dames on offer, although only four appear on screen at once. The gamer can either play with or against a friend, or if social intercourse is a problem, you can play with yourself in two contests in one player mode, Intercontinental Championship and WWF Championship. The differences between the two are few and far between. This is when the game starts to take the piss as the gamer fights each opponent in turn, then two, and three at once, until finally all eight gang up for a bit of the action. This caused myself unlimited amounts of stress and annoyance as the gameplay got very clumsy and disjointed.

It looks great, and in an ideal world, this is what wrestling should be all about – clubbing each other with baseball bats and setting fire to each other. However, this plays just like any other standard beat 'em-up.

It's not bad at all, but nowhere near as good as *MK3* or *Tekken*. *WWF* fans will probably love it though!



▲ Yeah right, would you take this dodgy character on? Never trust a man in a grubby dark mac.

WWF Wrestlemania

Play waits in the wings as America's answer to panto storms the consoles once again



PLAY+
information

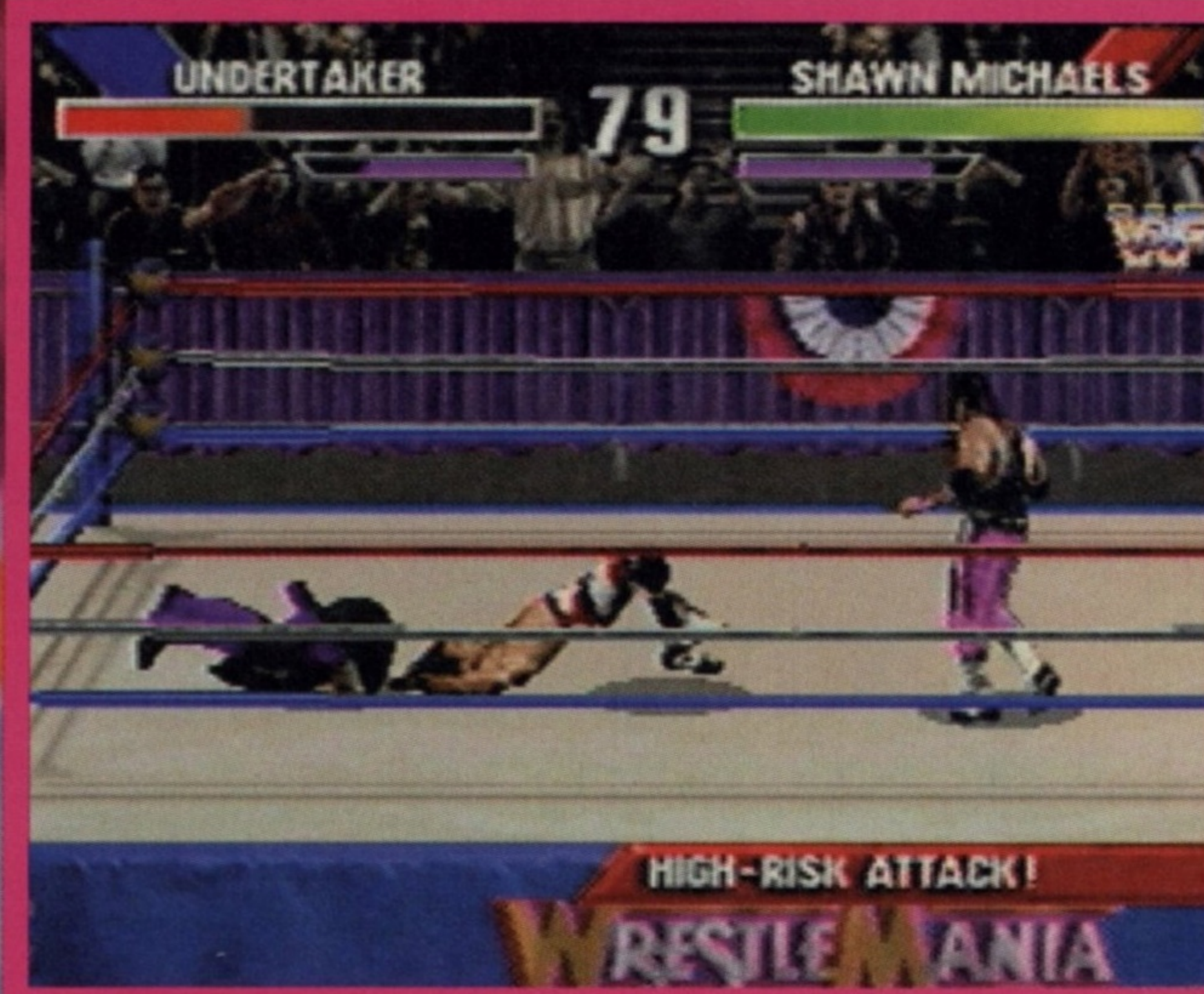
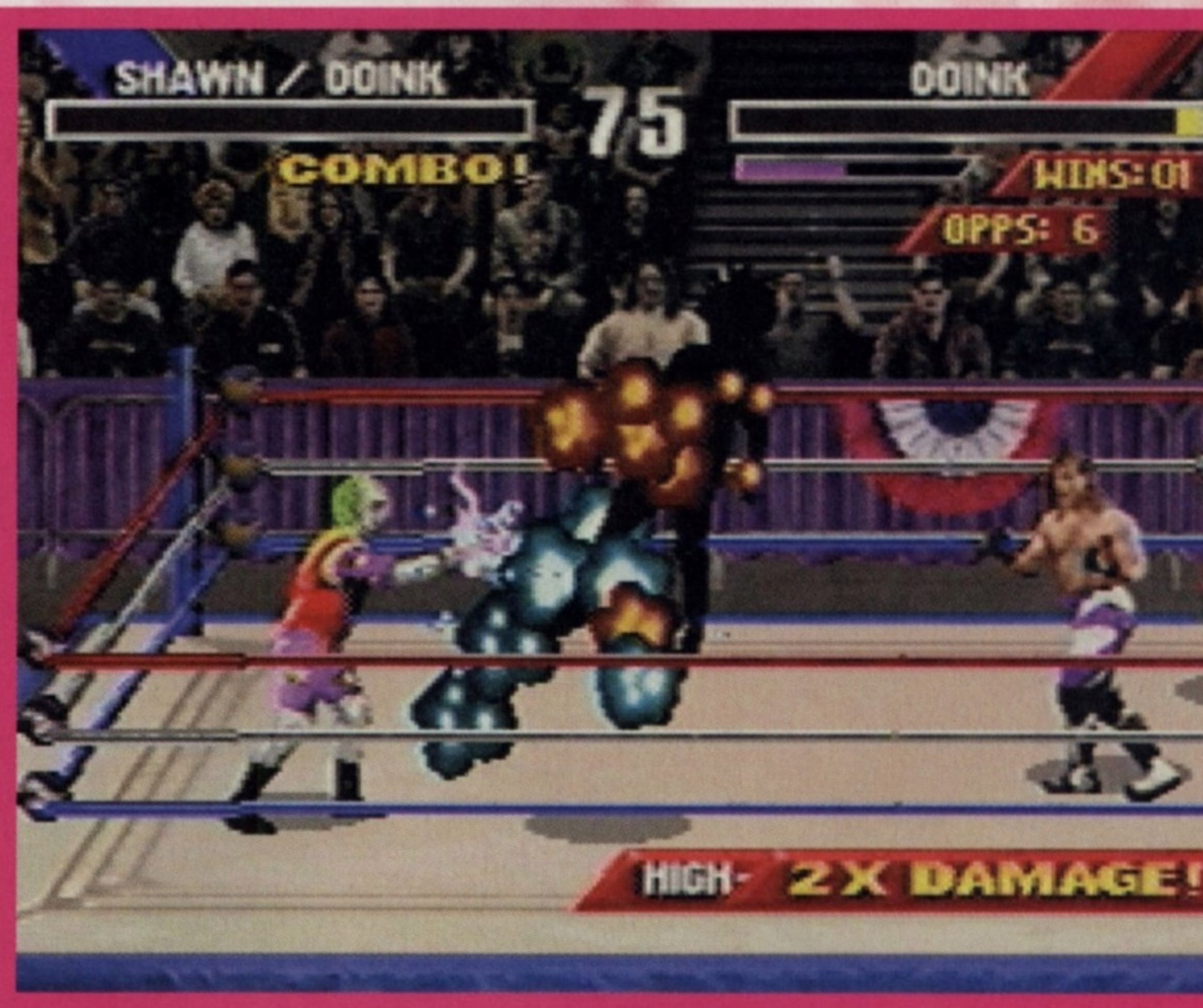
- Publisher: Acclaim
- Customer support: 0171 344 5000
- Expected price: £39.99
- Expected when: December 1st

◀ If only the real WWF fighters got thrown so high. Watch that crowd cheer!



▲ Now, now stop clowning around – stay and fight.

▼ Undertaker gets stunned by a special move shadow punch.



▲ Whoah. Not bad! Talk about hot stuff. This'd get the viewing figures up for *WWF Raw on Sky* – torching the other guy.

PLAY+
verdict

- Looks: ■■■■■■■■
- Sounds: ■■■■■■■■
- Irritability: ■■■■■■■■
- Value: ■■■■■■■■

Played 74%
Competent if unspectacular, staged boredom

Destroy! Destroy! Destroy! That's the name of the game in this racer. Asam Ahmad discovers the real meaning of the phrase 'nice guys finish last'...

Ram! Bam! Thank you ma'am!

Ever seen *Police! Stop!*. Ever thought those crashes looked coooooool, in a *Beavis and Butthead* kinda way? One of the good things about *Destruction Derby* is how your car handles. The motion is so realistic and the car handles exactly how you'd expect it to. This means that you can test out your own crash hypotheses in *Destruction Derby*. Practice your angles and approach speed in this crash simulator and when you get on to the motorway you can ram your way through the lanes on a motorway, leaving yourself with barely a scratch. Get everything right and you can get full points by forcing the other cars, especially old grannies holding up traffic, off the road with a full 360° head-wrenching spin!

Unfortunately get anything wrong, and, well you know what can happen. So *Play's* advice is to make sure you practice, practice, practice! Soon you'll be able to travel up and down the country at full speed with no hold-ups as all the slow people will either have to learn to drive faster or suffer the consequences!

See, not only do we tell you which games are the best, *Play* can solve this country's traffic problems. Stay with us, and next issue we'll show you how the world should work.

Destroyed



▲ A full 360° spin! That's the only way to rack up major points. Now, time to try out my driving skills for real...



▲ 11th position with only two laps to go. Right! It's no more Mr. Nice Guy. Watch out scum, here I come...



▲ The replay shows that the drivers were in a state of indecision about the barrier. Did it say 'Mouse' or 'Moose'?



▲ And Damon Hill shunts his way through! Schumacher will not be very pleased with that manoeuvre. Murray?



▲ Ram me will ya? Take that - I'll show you how hard I can play! Ha ha. Look at your poor pink and yellow trashmobile! I've wrecked it you pathetic creature, you.



ction Derby

► That logo is made up from all my crashed cars. I'm going back to rookie mode. What kind of a grab is this anyway? Somebody's for the chop now!



PLAY+ information

- Publisher: Sony Interactive
- Customer Support: 0151 2823333
- Expected Price: £44.99
- Expected When: Oct 20th

This isn't a race game, this is different. Forget 'prepare to qualify', forget striving for the chequered flag, the name of the game here is to go all out to destroy the opposition. Be evil, be nasty, be vicious...that's really the only way to play this game.

The main aim of *Destruction Derby* is not to finish first, it is to rack up points by knocking seven shades out of your rivals. This is done by pounding into the other cars from the side, from behind, wherever, just pound. Maximum points are achieved by forcing other cars to spin out through a full 360°.

The basic game, Stock Car Racing, is a mean little racing game where 'all' you have to do is complete the circuits in one piece. Having mastered the skills of driving against a bunch of nutters, it's time to exert your prowess over the rest of the pack in some devilish Wrecking Racing. This is not for wimps – more important than winning the race is making sure you take out the opposition at the same time. Cunningly timed, well executed nudges can ensure successful spin-outs.

The best part of the game, however, after the preliminary rounds of getting your car (and your ego) crushed to the size of pea on the racetrack, is the *Destruction Derby* itself. If ever there was a free for all, this is it! Your car is dumped in to the centre of a circular arena, and your only directive is to be the last one standing, or rolling around very slowly with your doors hanging off, to be more accurate. This is no easy task, with a menagerie of crazed maniacs hurtling towards you at breakneck speeds – and there's no

escape. Running is no option, the only tactic here is to go all out and give as good as you get. Sounds very violent... and it is. (Grin).

Graphically, the game doesn't break any barriers (groan) – the variety of views is pretty comprehensive, and the level of detail is certainly good, although the game suffers from the odd bit of slow-down when the screen becomes crowded although this doesn't detract from the game too much, it can be irritating, and isn't really something you'd expect from a PlayStation game.

The simplicity of the concept is perhaps one of the game's strengths, but also a weakness that could, over time, detract from the game's appeal. After the initial adrenaline-inspired mania, the game can get a little repetitive. Despite there being various difficulty levels and divisions to battle through, the game doesn't really change, apart from in the link-up mode where the addition of the human element adds a new taste of evil, and you really learn who your mates are.

Ultimately, *Destruction Derby* is a good, ruthless game (note, not fantastic, ruthless game) just as you think you've managed to prevent yourself from being pounded into a pulp, along come the other cars to put an end to your ideas about winning. The game dangles victory in front of your face and then rips it from you, with the snarly engines of the other cars sniggering at you to add insult to injury. It draws some sort of animal instinct out of you. I hate it. I love it.

► No fair! They're all ganging up on me. Right now I'm mad. Really mad.



▲ Which way now? I know, follow the others...

be
evil, be
nasty,
be
vicious

PLAY+ verdict

Looks: ■■■■■■■■
Sounds: ■■■■■■■■
Durability: ■■■■■■■■
Value: ■■■■■■■■

Played 86%

A great way to get wrecked...

The Raiden Project

PLAY+
Information

● Publisher: Ocean
● Customer support: 0161 832 6633
● Expected price: £39.99
● Expected when: Out now

The Raiden Project. Remember that? Play does its rose-tinted specs, gathers a pile o' ten pence pieces and trundles down to Andy's Arcade, Brighton. (circa 1988).

▼ Meeting baddies like this necessitates some smart bombing...

Raiden Project is a compilation comprising of the two arcade Raiden games.

The pair are simple, vertically-scrolling, shoot 'em ups. You travel from stage to stage blasting everything in sight, collecting power-ups as you ready for an end of level confrontation with a guardian. The two parts, *Raiden* and *Raiden II*, present the same game, but with *Raiden II* being more difficult. *Raiden II* also has some fancier graphics than its earlier counterpart.

As far as the whole package is concerned, this game doesn't push the PlayStation to any limits. In some ways, it could be argued that the conversion from the arcades is a little too accurate – the game hasn't been improved on in any way and this is, after all, a seven year old game. For



example, one of the things which made *Raiden* special was that at the time it was a state of the art shoot 'em up with superb graphics. Now, believe it or not,

games have moved on over the last seven years, so making a few alterations might have been advisable.

Soundwise, the PlayStation version has two modes. There is the original bleepy sound mode from the arcade, which sounds poor by today's standards, or there is the PlayStation remixed version which sounds better, but is still synthesised and rather basic.

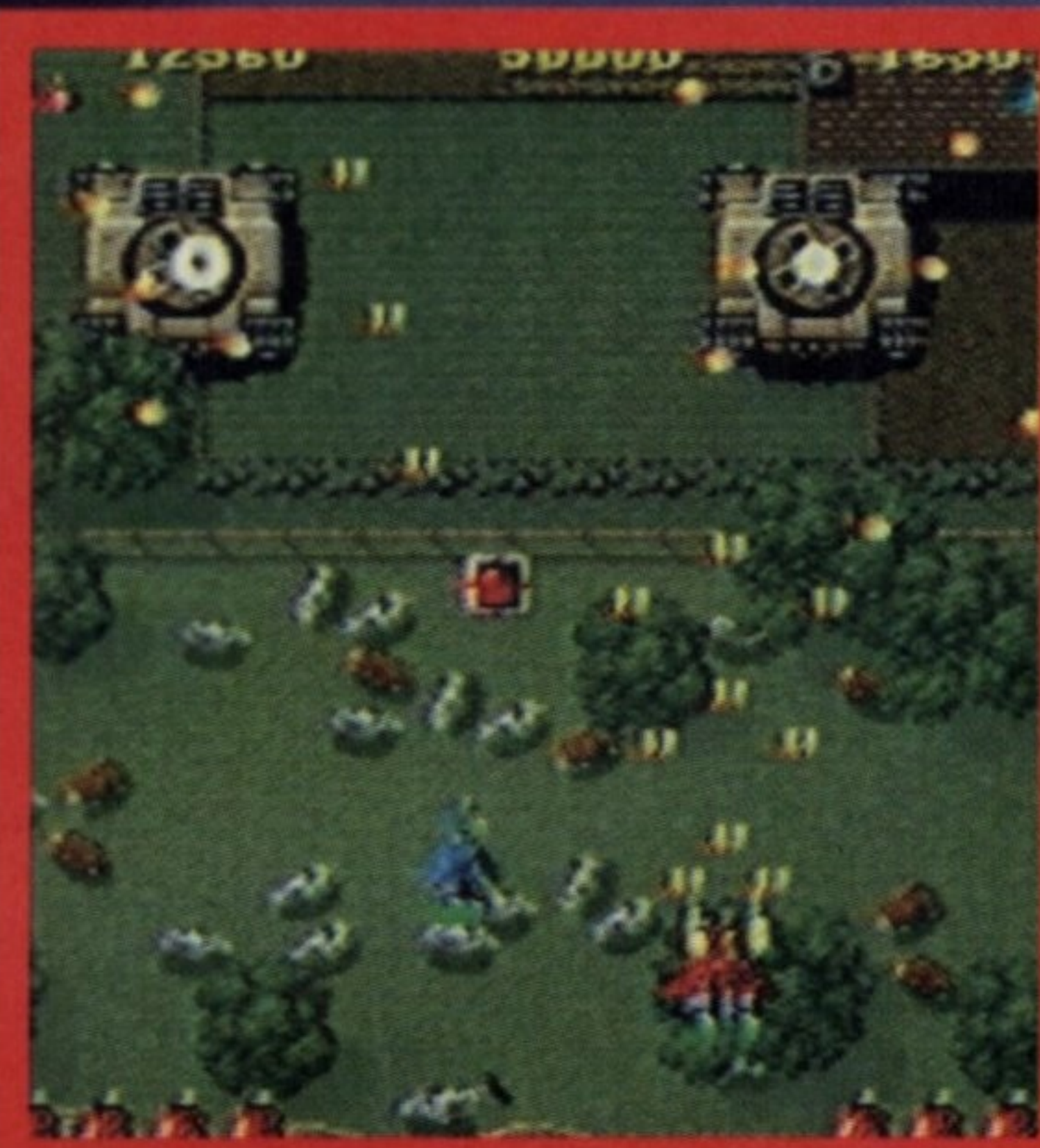
Ultimately, however, it is the game as a whole that is being reviewed here, and despite the above criticisms, *Raiden Project* is actually quite a good shoot 'em up. Unfortunately, with most games these days boasting multiple viewpoints, CD sound and immersive 3D worlds, *Raiden Project* looks very dated, and is a little stark in interest. So we've hammered it a bit, score-wise. The two player mode adds some spice to the game, allowing both participants to blast away simultaneously, but still, *Raiden Project* simply isn't complex enough to keep you coming back for more.



▲ In *Raiden II* you can even fight end of level meanies with candy floss.



▲ Watch out. This alien looks like he's getting a little annoyed.



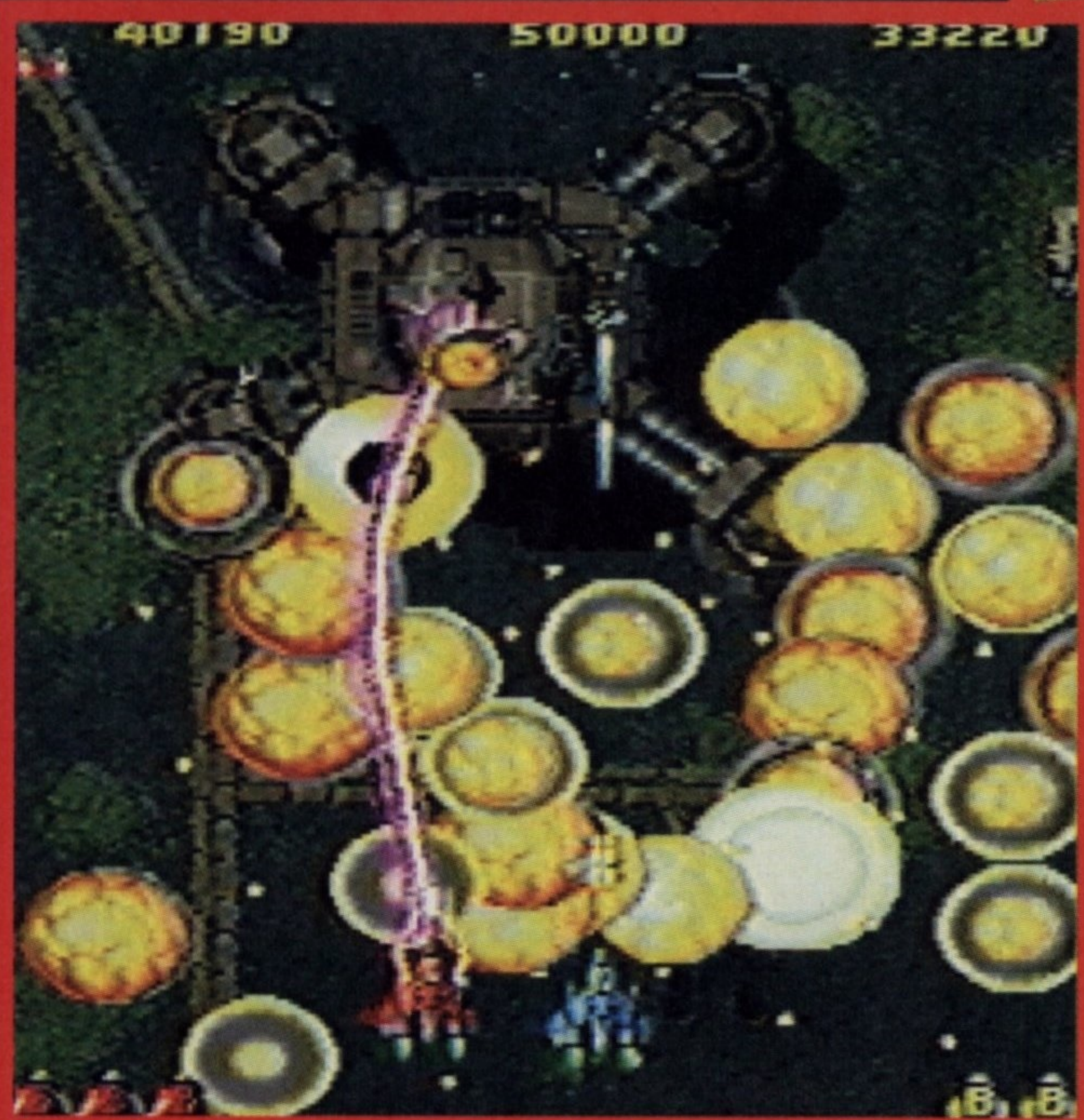
▲ Oh look! A little red piece of candy. Collect this and you'll go from strength to strength. Who says sweets are bad?

PLAY+
verdict

Looks: ■■■■■■
Sounds: ■■■■■■
Nostalgia: ■■■■■■
Value: ■■■■■■

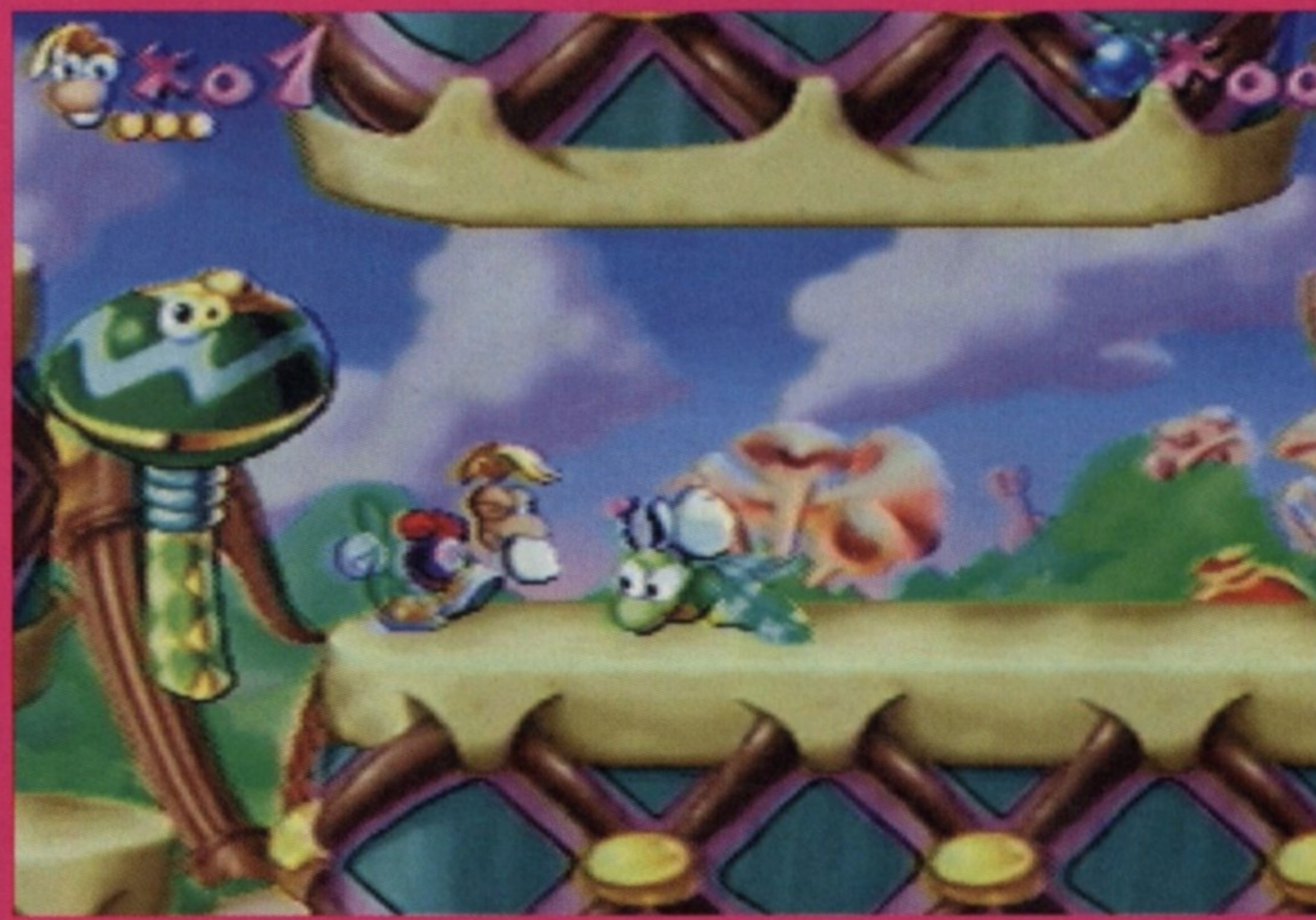
Played 68%

A perfect arcade conversion. Shame, really





▲ She won't bite you know. The fairy loves you and in return for your help will give you a power-up. Yippee!



▲ This beast just will not give up will he? Time it right and you will be able to bop him one with your punch which you picked up from the fairy.

Rayman

PLAY 
information

- **Publisher:** Ubi Soft
- **Customer support:** 0181 941 4004
- **Expected price:** £45-£50
- **Expected when:** October

Mellow out, guys, *Rayman* loves you. Play goes for a stroll among the flowers and discovers something of a hornet's nest.

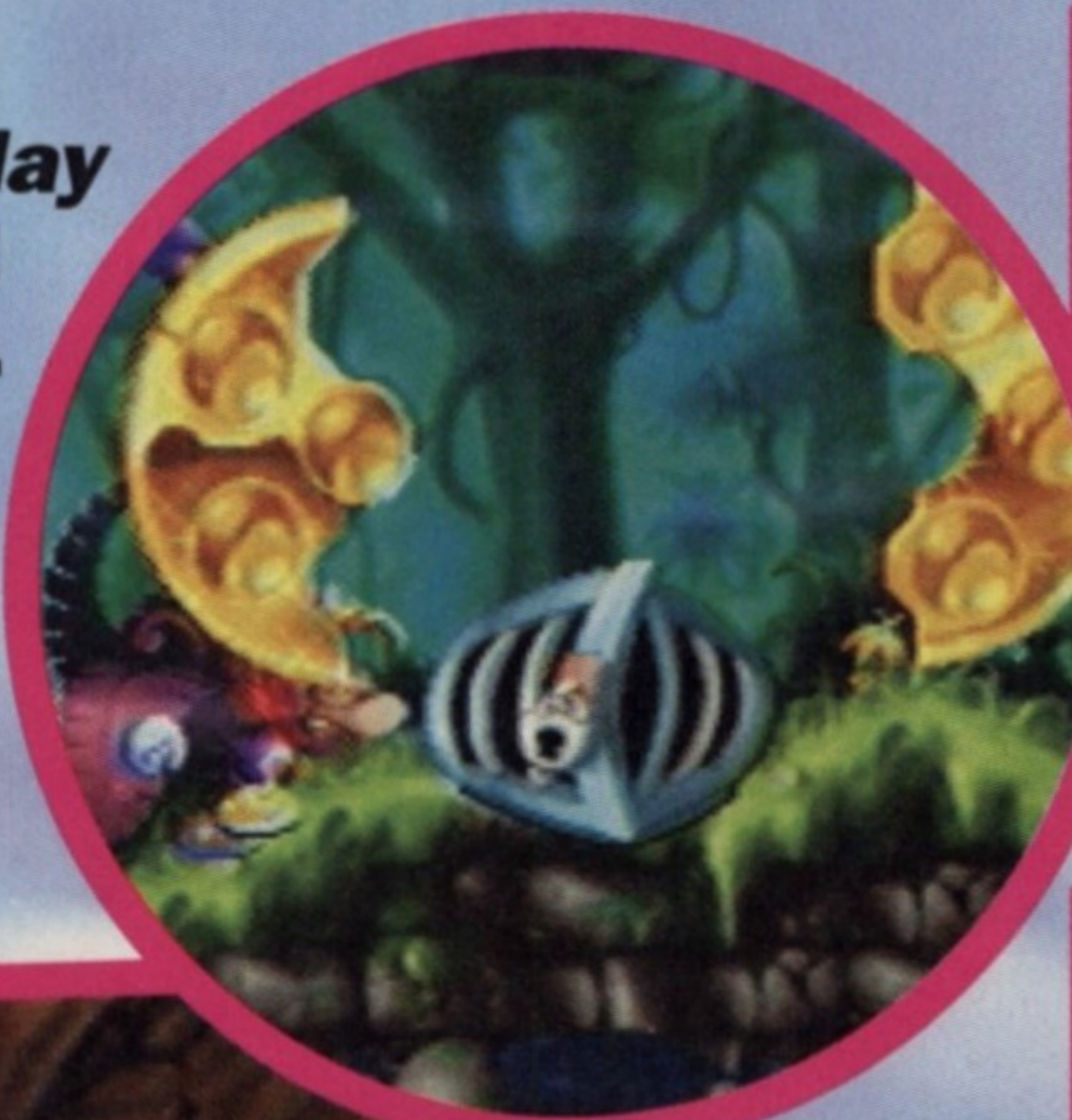
On 16-bit machines, platform games were churned out a dime a dozen; this is one of the first for the PlayStation, and it's quality. 'Scuse the fawning, but who'd of thought that the first PlayStation games would be quite so colourful, bright and tranquil as this is? For the record, it's also incredibly-hard, fiendish and addictive. *Rayman*, reckoned by our Si to be the best thing since *Sonic*, rates high in the cute video game character stakes, he's so loveable in fact that, once conquered, some enemies chip in to help his quest. Quite how, you can find out for yourself.

Help is needed. In all, there are 70 levels to traverse, and they're tough levels. It'll be a while before you finally free all the poor Electroons imprisoned in cages by the evil Mr Dark and to free all of them there cute Electroons, you need to get past some serious bruisers. Aid comes in the shape of a fairy (I don't know), who generously rewards Rayman with new abilities as he progresses. These include a punch, a helicopter jump and a cliff-hanging skill facility. All top platform fare, and all the better to reach parts of levels that you couldn't get to when you first started the game.

As you progress, light dawns on just how hard *Rayman* really is. Harder than downing 20 lagers, five vindaloos and still managing to stay on speaking terms

with your lower regions
first thing in the morning.

Rayman might not use all of the PlayStation's capabilities, but the ones it does, it certainly brings out the best in.



▼ Nice one Rayman. Fruit head there looks slightly embarrassed. Tee hee hee....



PLAY verdict

Looks: 

Sounds: 

Cockiness: ■■■■■■□□

Value:

Played 87%

Fiendishly difficult, but fun

Novastorm

PLAY information

- Publisher: Sony Interactive
- Customer support: 0151 282 3333
- Expected price: £39.99
- Expected when: Now

▼ As we said, it's very pretty. Pretty good looking and pretty awful. And this from the same publisher that brought you *Wipeout*.

Novastorm is a shoot 'em-up from the old school, it involves flying through several levels of rendered

landscapes blasting everything that moves, including the customary end of the level guardian.

The first thing that's noticeable about it is the level of thought put into the graphics. *Novastorm* is a pretty game. The next thing that's noticeable is how poor the game actually is. *Novastorm* is a pretty vacant game. After ten minutes, the initial blast-everything-in-sight appeal wears off, leaving you feeling very bored.

A definite disappointment.



Played 38%
Pretty vacant

Zeitgeist

PLAY information

- Publisher: Taito
- Customer support: No UK number.
- Expected when: Now on import
- Expected price: £69.99



A particularly dull 3D shoot 'em-up that plays so badly you'll be fumbling around for the off button before the first level is out. *Zeitgeist* is dogged by incredibly slow gameplay of a highly repetitive nature. There's nothing on show that surprises, let alone amazes, and generally you'll just come away feeling lost, dejected and completely fed up with your PlayStation. Stay away! stay away!

Played 51%
Incredibly slow, highly repetitive

Jumping Flash



PLAY information

- Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment
- Customer support: 0881 505 505*
- Expected when: Out now
- Expected price: £44.99



▲ Have I done the one about it being a gas, gas, gas yet. No? Thought not.

This cute novelty game takes the platform format to new heights as you step inside a large mechanical bunny rabbit to eliminate pests in outer space. Yes, I did say heights. Armed with insultingly large amounts of firepower and super springy legs, the gamer must bounce through six worlds collecting techno carrots and stomping on strange polygon insects. The 3D format is a refreshing twist on the old platform format of old, and the action is both grippingly addictive and surprisingly challenging. Smart.



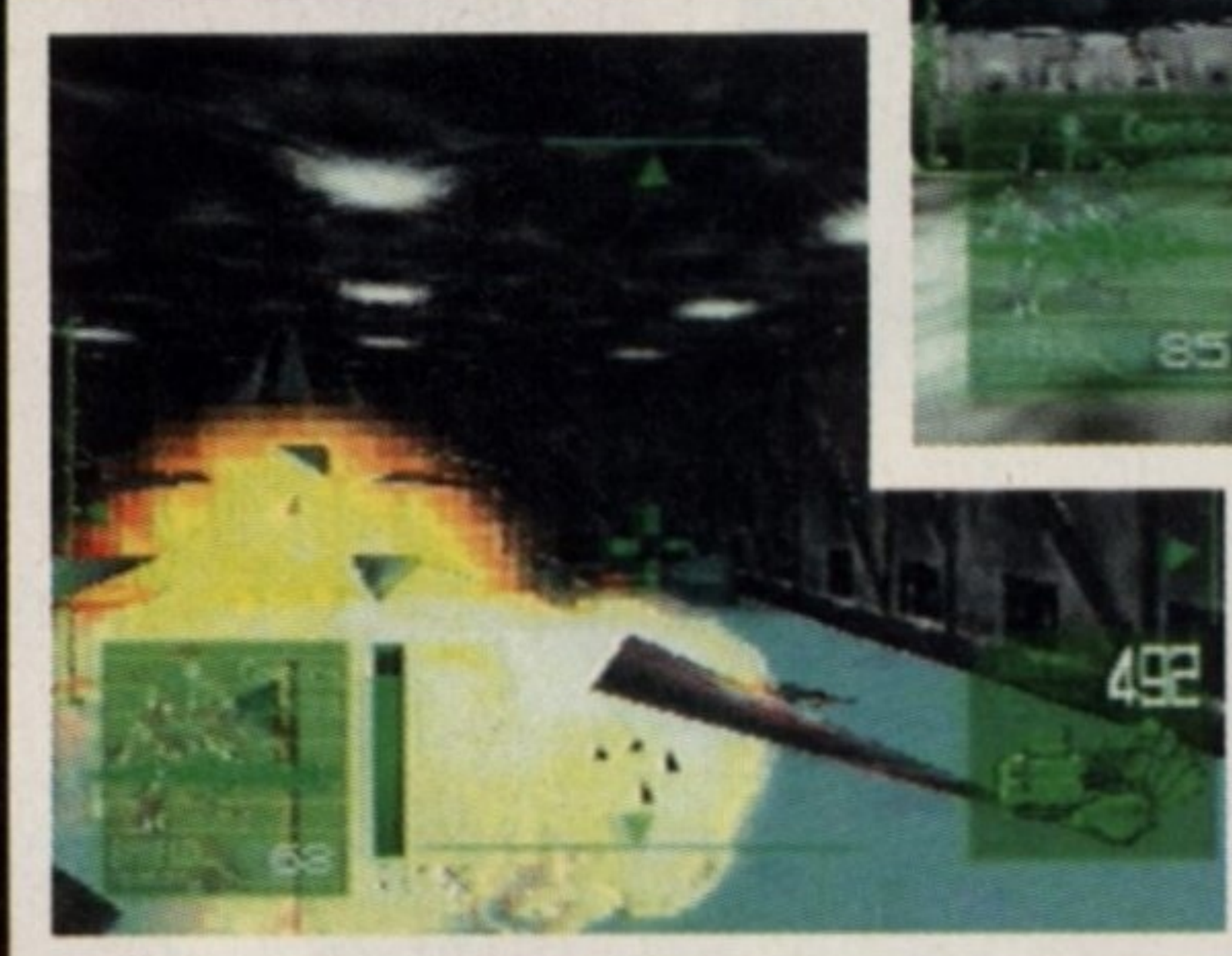
▲ Boing! This is a flash game. It looks flash, it plays flash, it has, er, flash ears. It's has flash 3D bits. Hey, it's *Jumping Flash*.

Played 87%
Addictive and challenging

Kileak The Blood

PLAY+
information

- Publisher: Sony
- Customer Support: 0881 505 505*
- Expected price: 39.99
- Expected When: October



▲ If you haven't yet, you'll notice a theme among the captions on this page. Something like: gosh, doesn't it look good? Gosh, isn't it crap?

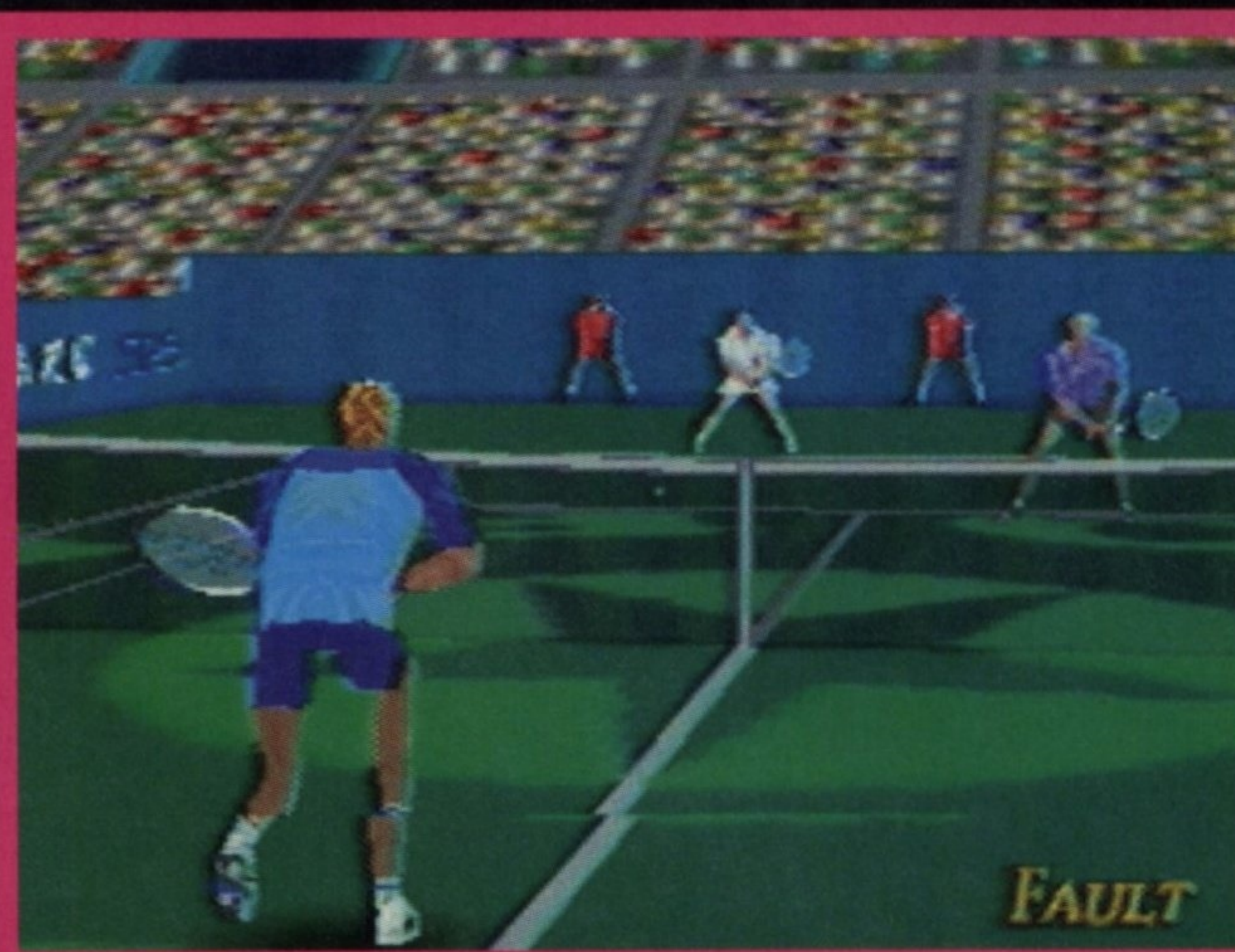
O

il software teams! If you're going to do a *Doom* clone, don't forget to put the enemies in. This has no more to shoot at than a couple of sad robots. It really isn't our idea of what a PlayStation game should be. What do you want? firepower, death and carnage. What do you get? Not what you want.

This is a weak corridor game, albeit graphically sound and smooth, which with *Doom* due before Christmas, you're best passing on.

Played 57%
A weak corridor game

Ground Stroke Tennis



PLAY+
information

- Publisher: Ocean
- Customer Support: No UK number
- Expected when: Out on US import
- Expected price: £49.99

► Is he A) about to smash it on the ground or B) rubbing his head. We don't know.



T

he first PlayStation tennis game comes booming with promise – but fails to amaze. The tongue-in-cheek approach is good with characters called Legacy (Agassi) and Cappuccino (Capriati), and there are also a mind-bending amount of perspectives to view the action. However most of these are redundant in practice (who could possibly play tennis on their head?). Too many flaws generally, the biggest gripes being the lack of options and unresponsive nature of the controls. Good looks, very little substance.



▲ It'd got the looks, but it ain't got the moves baby. And in tennis, ya gotta be mobile to win.

Played 65%
Good looks, little substance

Cybersled

PLAY+
information

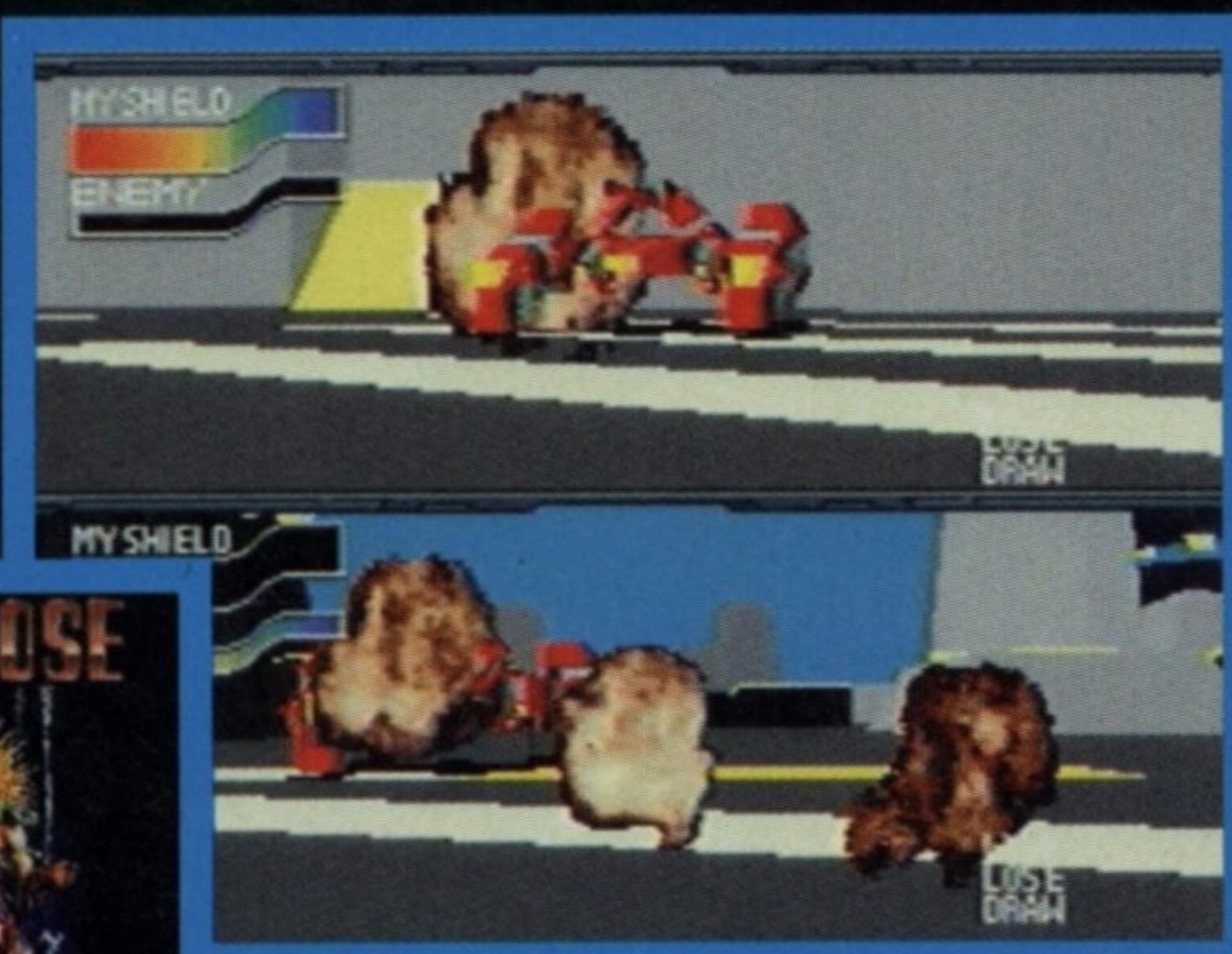
- Publisher: Sony
- Customer support: 0881 505 505*
- Expected price: £39.99
- Expected when: October

Hey! I'm on ice, no I'm not, it's the crap controls.



O

ne of the first titles and coin-op conversions to set foot on the PlayStation, *Cybersled* is a simple 3D battle game, and it's simply nothing more than average. Rendered battle tanks and animated intros are all very well, but when it comes to the gameplay there's nothing more to *Cybersled* than repetitive blasting and enemy-dodging. And, your average futuristic battle tank should not handle like a dog on roller skates either. Best left where it belongs, in the arcade.



Played 55%
Best left in the arcade



Video games aren't just all about looks and gameplay anymore. Software companies are recognising that music is just as vital in the overall playing experience. So, Ryan Butt decided that this was the perfect opportunity to indulge his second favourite past-time and write a music feature.

The definitive of SO

Game soundtracks aren't necessarily produced by faceless beings in the dusty basement of development houses anymore. The computer entertainment industry is becoming big business, and as technology evolves onto greater things and the prices inevitably rocket into the upper stratosphere, the public has a right to expect a little bit more for their money. So why shouldn't software houses splash out extra lolly in order to get the job done properly? The 16-bit era could get away with mediocre ditties to accompany the action, but when we're splashing out a fraction under 300 quid for a new so-called next gen super console, it's time for the developers to buck up their ideas and lavish the consumers with perfection – and who better to add that extra touch of class to a product than the real experts, the people that string together corking vibes for a living (and get to sleep with loads of woman in the process!). In this two-part feature, I speak to the musical giants involved in the new wave of games (as well as the unsung heroes known as in-house musicians), plus I delve into the little-known world of QSound and sample some of the latest sound systems which no PlayStation should be without. If you want to get the very best out of your new PlayStation, read on...

tion und

(part one)

Next Generation Terrorists

With soundtracks becoming a predominant force in video games, many of the big companies releasing PlayStation titles have commissioned professional musicians to pen the tunes. Take Gremlin for example, they've enlisted the help of indie rock meisters

Pop Will Eat Itself (PWEI) to create the necessary atmosphere in *Loaded*. Then there's *Wipeout*, the daddy of video games music. Developers Sony Interactive have not only produced a hell of a good looking game, but one with top tunes too. This is down to be signing up the talents of *Leftfield*, *Orbital* and *The Chemical Brothers* to give it that future-techno edge. We talk exclusively to

the funkmeisters whom penned the piping-hot vibes for *Wipeout* next month. But before the Johnny come lately glory boys arrive, in-game music was put together by a variety of unsung backroom heroes. Such a man is Mike Clarke, a top game musician by trade, and he settled down with *Play* over a pint or two to talk about his views on game soundtracks, and their importance in the overall playing experience. Mike, over to you my son...

Play: How long have you been a games musician?

MC: About five and a half years, including freelance work. My first game for Psygnosis was *Bill's Tomato Game* which was freelance, but when I finished college (B/TEC Computer Studies) I applied for a full-time job. As there were no full-time musicians at the time, I applied as a games tester. I had previously done external evaluation/testing for the company, and obviously just finished *Bill's Tomato Game*, which I'm sure helped in my getting the job. It was while in that position that I started doing music and sound FX for new games that had just been taken on, so I suppose it was a natural progression to become a full-time musician.

Play: What titles have you produced music for in this time?

(Editor's Note: By the time, Mike had finished listing all the games he'd worked on, I was half-pissed and the tape had nearly ran out. There were a lot, especially on the Amiga. We've cut his reply to his most recent works to free up some more space.)

MC: Well, *Dracula* on Mega CD, *Lemmings 2* on SNES, the SFX for *Sensible Soccer* on Mega CD,

Frankenstein on Mega CD, *Super Dropzone* on SNES and lately *Krazy Ivan* on PlayStation (due Christmas), *Mickey Mania FX* on PlayStation (due next year) and *Lemmings Paintball* on PlayStation.

◀ Reckon you've got enough floor space to house this mutha? If cost isn't important then this Sony KV-32 widescreen is the ideal bit of kit to plug a new PlayStation into.

Serious Bits of Kit

Face it, owning a PlayStation would be a complete waste of time if the only device you've got to play it on is your parents old black and white, nine inch portable telly that couldn't even generate one distinguishable colour let alone the other 16 million available in the machine's palette, and the super high-resolution graphics would fall flat on their arse. Exposing the 24 channel 16-bit digital stereo effects could also be a bummer with only one muffled mono speaker that sounds as though it's being amplified by a dented biscuit barrel. But help is at hand with our buyer's guide to the hottest hardware around that is guaranteed not only to transform your lounge into the control desk of the Starship Enterprise, but also make your PlayStation look and sound relatively good.

Visual Trips

1. Sony KV-32 WS (S)

▶ £2799.00

Features

- ▶ 32" screen.
- ▶ Dolby Surround Pro Logic.
- ▶ Nicam stereo.
- ▶ Picture in picture (PIP)
- ▶ Digital sound processor (DSP)
- ▶ Graphic equaliser

The daddy of all Televisions, this one is essential for all lottery-winning PlayStation owners. The 32" widescreen front end is ideal for exposing the machine's graphical capabilities – and seeing as it is NTSC ▶

1



compatible, you don't have to worry about it rejecting foreign signals if you own an import machine. It also comes complete with Dolby surround and graphic equalisers to finely tune those earth-shaking vibes, and the PIP function means that you can watch *Neighbours* whilst screaming round the corners in *Ridge Racer*!

2. Sony KV-16 WT 1

► £399.00

Features

- 16" Screen
- Full range speaker system
- Game button
- One button tuning and sorting

This telly is perfect for films and video games. By using the special game button, it will select the front AV input, transform the screen into wide mode and optimise the colour and brightness to suit the game's graphics. The full speaker system ensures that the PlayStation sound is belted out crystal clear and the thing is damn easy to tune as well.

3. Sony KV-X 2982 (S) Super Trinitron

► £699.00

Features

- 29" Screen
 - Full Spectrum Sound system
 - Advanced Fastext
 - One button tuning
- Slightly more affordable to the average stockbroker, this is top of the KV-X range and features everything you need to get good visuals and sound without going overboard. The modestly sized screen will portray the graphics in a startling light and you certainly won't go wrong with the Spectrum Sound when it comes to booming out those top tunes. It also has ►

2



Play: What has been your favourite sound score that you've done?

MC: I'd have to say *Krazy Ivan* because there were no restrictions (hurrah for CD consoles!!!) and I do like the music that I came up with. I enjoyed doing *Globule* though, and *Mega Apocalypse 2* (unreleased SNES game) was great fun too because I was asked to officially rewrite a real classic of a Commodore 64 Rob Hubbard track!

Play: How long does it take to produce a piece of music for a game?

MC: It depends on the style of music I am writing. For example, if I am feeling tired or depressed or something it's more difficult to write jolly, happy music than to write some evil horrendous noisy thing. I do like to take time to get my music right, and I like to take pride in my work. I could write a 4-5 minute title piece for CD in about 7-8 hours at a quality I am happy with, but if the time is available I spend a few days on one track. Music for internal sound chips takes quite a bit longer because I have to sample instruments, edit them, get the loops right, convert them, make sure they don't take up too much memory etc.

Play: Can you briefly explain the process of creating music to fit in with a particular type of game?

MC: No. Only joking! Erm, what do you class as "briefly"? First of all we (musicians/programmers/designers/whoever) decide what style of music would fit the type of game. For instance, *Wipeout* needed fast techno stuff where as *Krazy*

Ivan has much more of an industrial sound to it. Once that is established, if it is a style I have never written before (i.e. for *Lemmings Paintball* there is a big brass band style track which is something I had never done before) then I go on a search for that type of music. Maybe I'd go and buy some CD's by an artist who writes in that style, to first of all get a feel for it.

Then I get bars and pipes on and start creating. I may start by finding/creating a new sound as new sounds can sometimes inspire a whole track or a main theme. Then I will start fiddling on the keyboard with that sound until I get a good chord sequence, bass line, melody or sometimes a drum beat, and play that into the sequencer. I will then play that short section over and over, imagining what will go over the top of it. When I think I have something that will sound good, I find/create the right sound and put it into the sequence. Certain styles do have certain rules which seem to dictate that style of music. For instance, reggae usually has a chord played on every offbeat; *Frankenstein's* doomy gothic music consisted of discordant key changes on a pipe organ or strings. If this is applicable then I will build this into the tune, trying not to make it

sound contrived. From there the track just builds up in much the same way, each time adding another layer or progression. Lo and behold, there's a piece of music!

Play: It's good job we said "briefly".

MC: (laughs)

Play: How do you feel about big-time musicians entering the gaming industry?

MC: Personally, I think it's a good idea as long as it is done with the music in mind, and not just for the name of the artist. After all, it wouldn't have been right to get someone like *Dire Straits* to do the music for *Wipeout*, would it?

Play: Too right.

MC: The gaming industry is now huge and music has always played a big part in games, the same way it does in films. It's only right that the gaming and music industries come closer together. It's not very nice for freelancers that make their living out of game music though. There they are, slaving away and in comes some big name with a bank balance to match, takes their job from under them and gets paid ten times what they would have earned just because of the name. It is disheartening when you've been doing a job for years and somebody who has never done it before is suddenly earning a lot more than you. It is also a bit one-sided at the moment. I mean how many computer game musicians' CD's can you see on the shelves in HMV? And I don't think it is through lack of quality either. I think computer game music has an awful stigma attached to it. People still seem to think it's all bleeps and blops. Hopefully with big-name artists coming in to do game music this attitude will change. Maybe in the future people will play a game with music by an unknown computer game musician and go looking for more of their music via the music shops. We shall see.

Play: Do you think that the likes of *Leftfield*, *Orbital*, and *The Chemical Brothers* will increase the game's

3



4



chances of success?

MC: Definitely. Especially if the tracks are new and unavailable elsewhere. A lot of the time when playing a game, I would switch off the music and put some "real" tunes on, but there's no need if the "real" music is already there and it's by an artist who you are already a fan of.

Play: Is there a kind of music/computer entertainment cross-over occurring that will ultimately see more and more big name bands becoming involved in video games?

MC: Most definitely. I don't think there is any way that a big name will get involved in anything other than CD sound though. If a game requires music from the computer's sound chip you can forget having a big name on the game.

Play: Why has it suddenly happened now though and not, say, during the time when the SNES and Mega Drive were still cool? Is it anything to do with the improved next gen console sound?

MC: It's purely because music in a game can be played from CD. Even now, the internal sound is not good enough to support the big names. Can you see *The Chemical Brothers* doing a track in 24

channels and fitting it into 512k? I certainly can't. Internal sound always has been and always will be limited to the memory and sound channels available, and big names are used to all of the equipment they own. If you drove a Mercedes, would you like to step down and use a mini for three months? I don't think so somehow.

Play: How easy is it to work on the Sony PlayStation?

MC: Well, if the music is from CD then it's just a case of fitting the sound FX into the 512k available (the PlayStation does have hardware compression so this effectively becomes about 1.8 Megabytes). If the CD cannot be used for music then music has to be played from the sound chip. The music is written in the same way as if it was to be played from CD, except you have to make sure that it does not play more than 24 sounds at one particular time (maybe even less if there are also sound FX to be played simultaneously).

The sounds then have to be sampled from my equipment (and made small enough to fit into the RAM available), converted into PlayStation format and loaded into a program called Sound Delicatessen on the Mac. Once the samples are set-up you can load in your MIDI file (which contains the music data itself) and play the music.

The PlayStation also has definable reverb which you can add onto the music or FX and this really does make a great difference to the sound.

Play: What projects are you currently working on and what future plans to you have?

6



MC: I am currently finishing off *Lemmings Paintball* for the PC, PlayStation and Mac. After that I will be composing a number of rock tracks with a local guitarist for a racing game we are doing. There is also a strong possibility that this game will feature tracks by one or two very well-known guitarists! As for the future, I would like to see computer game musicians being seen in the same light as recording artists as far as game music goes. I hope to have a record deal myself in the future, either as a solo artist or with the band I am in. Until then, I am happy to work for Sony and do music for the best games on the best console yet.

Play: Finally, are game musicians the great unsung heroes of the industry or what?

MC: Oh yes. We and our music certainly seem to go unnoticed most of the time, especially now that 3D graphics have the current limelight. I hope people will take the game music more seriously now, and I think that is starting to happen. The problem with a lot of in-game music is that it is incidental, and only adds to the game (I don't think most people realise just how much it does add though). Whereas you need to be able to see a game and need to have the program there to play, the sound is not absolutely essential (although I think we all know how awful games without sound are!). Now, get another round in.

Play: Sure. Thanks a lot, that was great. cheers my man.

Next Month!!!

Don't forget to tune into the second and final part of our Play Music feature next month when we'll be talking exclusively to *Leftfield*, *Orbital*, and *The Chemical Brothers* plus taking a close look at QSound, a new technology which threatens to bring surround sound to the world of video games.

parental lock, sleep timer and comes complete with a nifty video stand.

Sound Bites

The PlayStation sounds great connected up to any hi-fi system, but here are some desirable bits to make the overall experience even better.

4. Sony SA-VA 15 Speakers

► £599.99

Ouch! The very sight of these towering monsters is even to put the willies up any sound boffin. The SA-VA 15 Dolby Pro Logic active speaker system can generate a staggering 100 watts of power and comes with five amplifier channels. They come at a sweaty price but if you've got the sponds, take the plunge – just ignore the next few bank statements.

5. Sony PMC-202 Hi-Fi

► £249.99

The affordable hi-fi system is ideal for booming out those PlayStation sounds. It booms out 25 watts of power, has an LCD display, CD player, cassette deck and tuner, and also comes with Mega Bass and electronic sound mode. All at an unbeatable price.

► TOP BUY ◀

6. Sony SRS-D 2K Speaker System

► £99.99

Armed with this little set-up, you'll be able to blast out those sounds at ground-shaking volume without breaking the bank. As well as being compatible with everything, they come complete with a built in amplifier, 20 watt output and full range bass system. A stonking good buy.

5



Big Discworld Giveaway

To celebrate the arrival of the hilarious *Discworld* on the PlayStation, *Play* are delighted to be able to offer you, in conjunction with Sony Interactive, a positive treasure trove of Terry Pratchett collectibles. An absolute must for all fans!

1st Prize

- The winner will receive valuable Clare Craft models of the *Discworld* characters – Librarian, Death, Rincewind and Luggage.
- A complete set of ten collectable Pewter figurines.
- A copy of Terry Pratchett's *Men at Arms*, signed by the great man himself.
- A copy of the PlayStation version of *Discworld*.

Runners-up

For 10 poor chaps who don't quite make the grade, we also have copies of the book *Men at Arms*. Although these aren't signed. Hey, you should have been a winner pal!

All you have to do is...

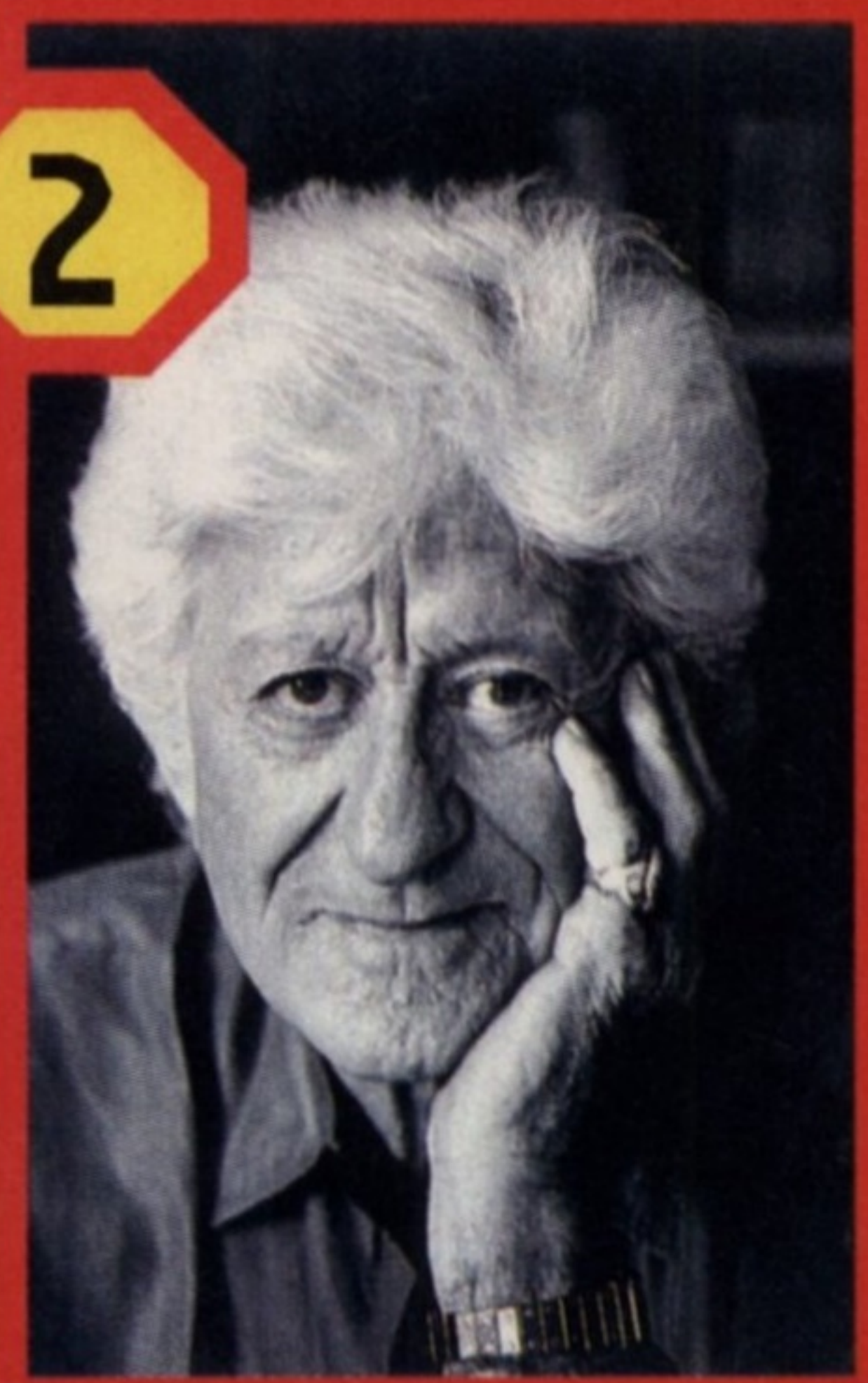
- To win all this fantastic Terry Pratchett gear, all we are asking you to do is name the two famous geezers pictured on the left who provided the voices for many of the characters in *Discworld*. Easy peasy lemon squeezy!

How to enter

Send your answers on the back of a postcard or a sealed envelope, along with your name and address to:

Terry Pratchett
Play Magazine
 Paragon Publishing Ltd
 Paragon House
 St Peter's Road
 Bournemouth
 BH1 2JS

Please note: The editor's decision is final and employees of Paragon Publishing, relatives and their friendly neighbourhood wizards may not enter.



Station Master

Battle Arena Toshinden

► Play as Gaia

Enter the following code whilst on the title screen:

Down, down, right, right plus weak slash. Then go to the option screen where you can select your fighter. Pick Eiji, then press up until Gaia's face appears. You will now be able to select her to fight with.

► Control the Cameras

To move the cameras around in even more weird and wonderful directions, go to the options screen and set the control to 32. When done, a hidden camera option will appear under the camera action named "yourself". Select it and then go to the control again, this time setting it to 33. Start a new game, pause it and hold down all of the hit buttons. The left and right buttons on both pads will now operate the cameras. Select with changes between the scaling and rotating.



Ridge Racer

► Extra Cars

To obtain more cars, destroy all of the aliens in the space invaders game before it loads. Then go to the car selection screen. You will then be able to pick a wider variety of cars to race with. Exciting huh?

► Mirror Tracks

You can operate this trick on all tracks. Just run into the wall which is behind the starting line at a minimum of 100km/h. If you have done it right, the track should now be completely mirrored. Make sure though that you don't go over the overhead sign before turning around. If you do, the door will disappear and the cheat won't be activated.



Jumping Flash

► Start on any World

On the title screen, press the following buttons to enter any world/stage.

Up, up, down, down, x, x, left, right, left, right, x, triangle, x, triangle. At this point the screen should turn red if you have done it correctly. Now press the



start button and use left and right on the D-pad to choose a world or stage.

Doom

► Level Extra's

When you are situated in the *Doom*-style level, by shooting the walls with a picture of Baron Aloha, they will flash white, leading you into openings with various power-ups and extra lives in them.

► Title Screen clouds

This little trick allows you to make the clouds on the title screen move faster. Simply hold down all four buttons on top of the pad and then move the D-pad up to make them go faster and down to slow them down. It's amazing what programmers sneak into games, isn't it?

Parodius Deluxe Pack

► Hidden Stage

Shoot down the ships in the first wave of stage two. Then, when the second wave fly on screen, shoot the first ship and avoid all of the others. After you have done this, the enemies will explode and you will be warped into a tough hidden section.

Rayman

► Extra continues

When you have either 0, 1, or 2 continues remaining, on the continue screen, keep repeating the following sequence of buttons on the left controller: Up, down, right, left. This, if it has been done correctly, will give you 10 continues.



Hey,

it had to be done. The Station Master is here, ready to solve all your PlayStation gaming teething troubles. We're decided to break you in gently this month with some classic tips on the games you've probably already gone out and bought. There's more.

Over the next six pages you'll find Part One of our guide to the PlayStation's first classic game, the awesome all-singing, all-dancing *Wipeout* and a complete guide to one of the next, *Mortal Kombat 3*. That way, when it hits the shops next month, you'll be fully prepared. Say "thank-you Station Master".

It's time to knuckle down to some serious race action. So take in the amazing backdrops and tune into the trance-like sounds of Wipeout.. And if you play the *Play* way, success is guaranteed. Here's a taster of our complete guide to help you on your way. Anyone unable to wait for part two (coming next issue), should check out the *Play* pages on Paragon On-Line, our Internet service. You can reach us at www.paragon.co.uk/play.

Cruising for a bruising

How to fight back at Wipeout

Craft

There are so many different types of craft to select, but what do they all do? Making sure you pick up the right vehicle for yourself is vital. Read the following and you should be safe to race...

AG Systems

- ▶ John Dekka
- ▶ Daniel Chang

Stats

- ▶ Acceleration: 5
- ▶ Maximum Speed: 3
- ▶ Mass: 3
- ▶ Turning Circle: 4

If you want good acceleration, then this is the team to use. Overall speed though is pretty average, so the best way of making sure you don't get overtaken on any of the straights is to employ all the lovely weapons available.

If you feel that your driving skills are pretty average at the moment, then AG Systems is a good all-round team to race with. Oh yes. It's just the case of which pilot now, John or Daniel?

Auricom

- ▶ Arial Tetsuo
- ▶ Anastasia Cherovski

Stats

- ▶ Acceleration: 3
- ▶ Maximum Speed: 4
- ▶ Mass: 5
- ▶ Turning Circle: 3

Bloody big, but at the same time, extremely fast and a couple of smart driver names to boot. If you use these machines you'll have to make good use of your air-brakes, especially when you get into the Rapier league as the extra speed requires a hell of a lot of braking compared with Venom. With this ship, if another competitor even attempts to knock you out of his path, you're safe to give him a good shunt up the proverbial rear end!

Track Guide

There are six in all and they're tough, big and bad. Here's a few pointers on how to grapple with the first three.

Terramax

Venue *Terramax*

Class *Venom*  Date Leading Hold Tight!

Track Details

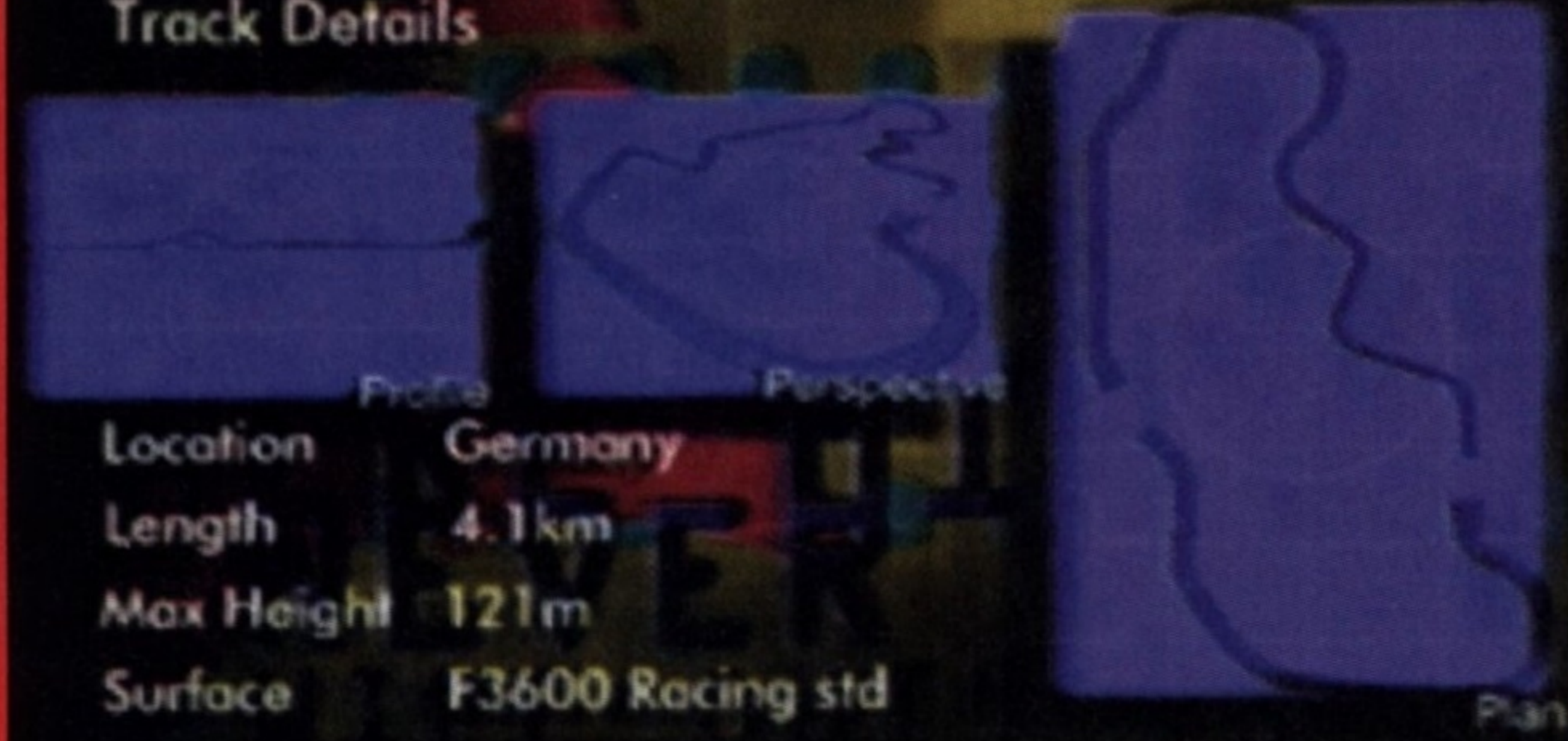
Location *Germany*

Length *4.1km*

Max Height *121m*

Surface *F3600 Racing std*

Profile Perspective Plan



The track that really tests your corner taking. Terramax is big and wild! Full of power-ups and a couple of tricky jumps to master which need to be taken with great caution.

This is one of the tracks that allows you to select certain routes to gain more speed-ups and take the lead!

Not the fastest track of the lot of them, but makes up for that by being more than a laugh on the blast 'em-up side.



Qirex

- Kel Solaar
- Arian Tetsuo

Stats

- Acceleration: 2
- Maximum Speed: 5
- Mass: 4
- Turning Circle: 2

You don't get a team any faster than the Qirex, but when it comes to the corner taking, the two craft in this class handle just like cars without their steering wheels!

The only way to fly this ship well is to make good use of the air-brakes – find a rhythm and you'll find the handling becomes slightly more bearable. Planning your line is imperative, you really have to take each corner as early as possible. If you can master this ship, nothing will be able to stop you.

Feisar

- Sofia de la Rente
- Paul Jackson

Stats

- Acceleration: 4
- Maximum Speed: 2
- Mass: 2
- Turning Circle: 5

You can't fault the Feisar team on ease of handling, but there's a downside to it, and it becomes more of a handicap the further you progress. Speed, or rather, lack of it. You can just about afford a few crashes in a Feisar but any more than that and you'll soon be dropping out of contention.

Try to pick up speed boosters when you are just behind your opponent. Because of your speed, the opposition will shunt you out of the way if you're not fast enough. Probably the best ship for newcomers, thanks to its light feel and easy turning. For beginners at least, the speed for handling sacrifice will probably work out faster in the long run as scraping the barriers eats up quite a bit of time.

Altima VII

Probably the first track you will suss out. Altima carries a few long straights and turns, and looks similar to a figure of eight track, only with an additional few corners.

A definite challenge for first-comers to the game. It's probably the easiest of the tracks, though it's still fast and provides a tough enough challenge for beginners. A good track for settling in, without taking the action out of the whole idea, but once you've mastered the later courses, Altima should become a bit of a walkover.

Venue *Altima*

Class *Venom*  Date Leading Hold Tight!

Track Details

Location *Canada*

Length *3.5km*

Max Height *119m*

Surface *K1600 racing std*

Profile Perspective Plan




Karbonis V

Being just a slight change from the from the Altima course, Karbonis is by no means the kind of track to pick for a "muck-around". Once the green light goes, there's no turning back, as you'll be instantly in the action from the start. There's a good variety of tight corners and sometimes it's best to avoid picking up the speed boosts, as you might find yourself propelled into the barriers rather than past the opposition.

It's a fairly fast track once you've worked out when to take the corners plus where the relevant speed-ups are situated. You should, by now, know how your chosen craft handles properly.

Venue *Karbonis*

Class *Venom*  Date Leading Hold Tight!

Track Details

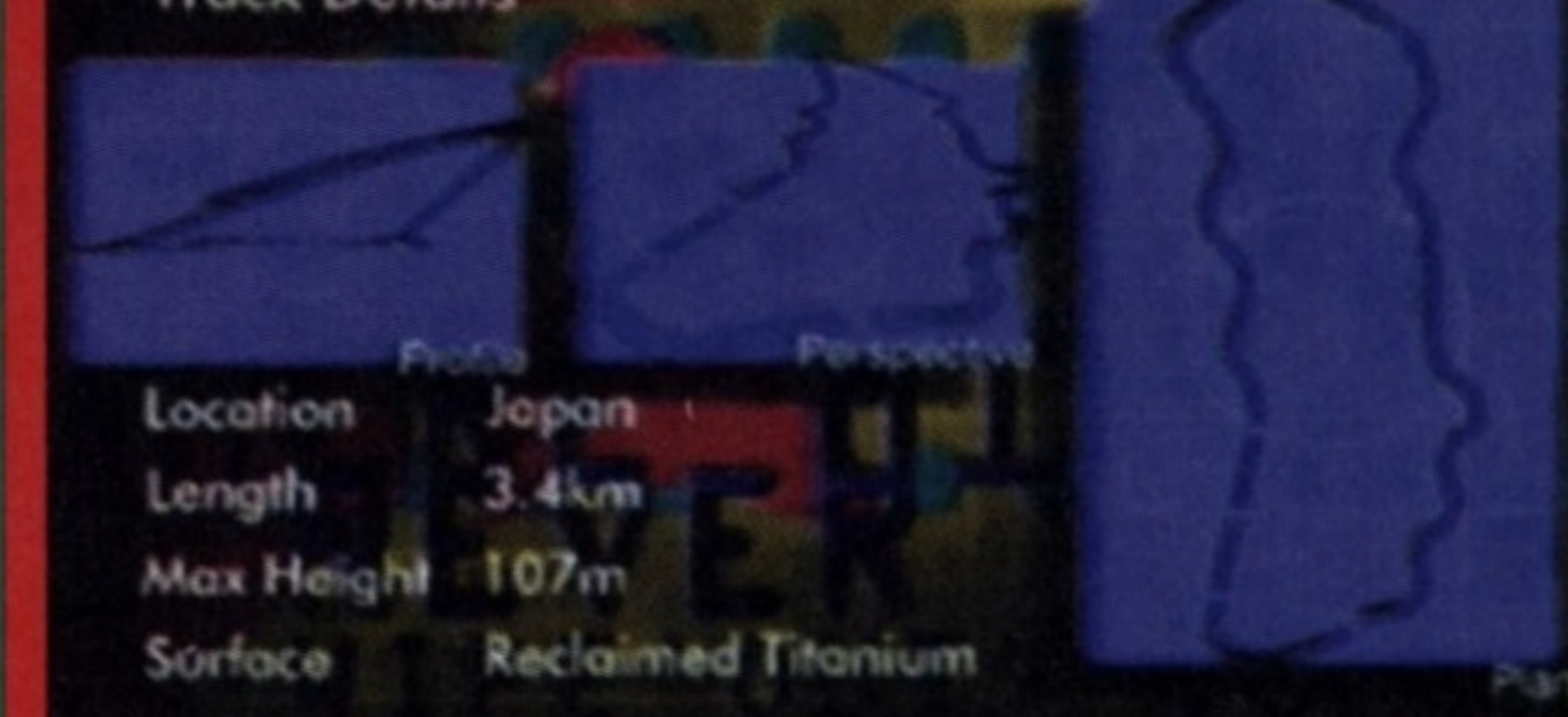
Location *Japan*

Length *3.4km*

Max Height *107m*

Surface *Reclaimed Titanium*

Profile Perspective Plan




Joy! The greatest beat 'em-up ever in the history of beat 'em-ups (apparently) has launched an all out attack on the PlayStation – months ahead of the Saturn. But how does it fare up against the polygon pundits? Pretty damn well if the truth be known. It's coin-op perfect in every shape and form and the big attraction is undoubtedly the gut-wrenching array of death moves which, funnily enough, are what this guide is all about. So go out, buy the game and then refer to this unbeatable guide to all the moves and more - courtesy of the gamers in the know!

Key

F – Forward
B – Back
U – Up
D – Down
LP – Low Punch
HP – High Punch
LK – Low Kick
HK – High Kick
BL – Block
R – Run

MK3

Player's Guide



Liu Kang

– grand master man

Standard moves

High Fireball – F, F, HP
Low Fireball – F, F, LP
Torpedo Kick – F, F, HK
Bicycle Kick – Hold LK for 3 secs
Crushing Combo – HP, HP, BL, LK, LK, HK, LK

Finishing Moves

Fatality 1 (Coin-op Splat) – From anywhere, hold BL and press U, D, U, U and R + BL.
Fatality 2 (Burn Out) – F, F, D, D, LK from anywhere.
Pit Fatality – R, BL, BL, LK
Friendship – R, R, R, D
Babality – D, D, D, HK
Animality – Inside sweep range, hold BL and press D, D, U.



▲ Ahh! isn't young Master Kang cute as a pant-wetting tyke?



▲ Kang keeps fit by riding his bike... on someone's face!



▲ Let this be a message to anyone wanting to mess with our Liu, take the incineration of this replicant for example, very nasty!



▲ "Have some of that you cheap imitation you!" Kang demonstrates that the church of MK obviously isn't big enough for two dragons.



Sonya Blade

– hard-ass babe

Standard moves

Ring Toss – D, F, LP
Bicycle Kick – B, B, D, LK
Leg Grab – D, LP+BL
Air Punch – F, B, HP
Crushing Combo – HK, HK, HP, HP, LP, BL+HP

Finishing Moves

Fatality 1 (Crusher) – one jump away, hold BL+R and press U, U, B, D
Fatality 2 (Death Kiss) – one jump away, B, F, D, D, R
Pit Fatality – F, F, D, HP
Friendship – B, F, B, D, R
Babality – D, D, F, LK
Animality – LP, F, F, D, F, LP

Mr. Jax

– robo wrestler max

Standard Moves

Ground Slam – hold LK for 3 secs
Missiles (one) – B, F, HP
Missiles (two) – F, F, B, B, HP
Running Punch – F, F, HK
Gotcha – F, F, LP
Backbreaker – tap BL whilst in air
Multislam – tap throw and then rapidly press HP
Crushing Combo – HK, HK, D+HP, HP, BL, LP

Finishing Moves

Fatality 1 (Big Foot) – one jump away, R, BL, R, R, LK
Fatality 2 (Slicer) – get in close, hold BL, U, D, F, U, release and press BL
Pit Fatality – D, F, D, LP
Friendship – LK, R, R, LK
Babality – D, D, D, LK
Animality – hold LP, F, F, D, release and press LP



▲ Like father like son. I hope you can get cyborg-arm upgrades.
▼ Obviously a futuristic twist on the pistols at dawn theme.



Mr. Stryker

– gun-toting nutter

Standard Moves

Clothesline – F, F, HK
Ankle Swipe – F, B, LP
High Grenade – D, DB, B, HP
Low Grenade – D, DB, B, LP
Crushing Combo – LK, HP, HP, LP

Finishing Moves

Fatality 1 (Bomb) – get close, D, F, D, F, BL
Fatality 2 (Taser) – full screen away, F, F, F, LK
Pit Fatality – hold BL, F, U, U, HK
Friendship – LP, R, R, LP
Babality – D, F, F, BL, HP
Animality – two steps away, R, R, R, BL



▲ In case you were ever wondering what a crazed alien killing machine keeps inside his torso – hey presto! So, er... what does he keep down his pants then?

Kung Lao

– the monk that says ciao

Standard Moves

Hat Toss – B, F, LP
Teleport – D, U
Shield Spin – F, D, F, then tap R repeatedly
Hammer Kick – D+HK in air
Crushing Combo – HP, LP, HP, LP, LK, LK, HK



▲ Kung Lao manages to kick his twin right where it hurts most.

Finishing Moves

Fatality 1 (Hat Slice) – in sweep range, F, F, B, D, HP
Fatality 2 (Tornado) – D+BL+R repeatedly
Pit Fatality – D, D, F, F, LK
Friendship – R, LP, R, LK
Babality – D, F, F, HP
Animality – get in close, R, R, R, R, BL



Sheeva

– multi-armed diva

Standard Moves

Fireball – D, DF, F, HP
Teleport Stomp – D, U
Quake Stomp – B, D, B, HK
Crushing Combo – HP, HP, LP, HK, HK, LK, B+HK

Finishing Moves

Fatality 1 (Ripskin) – get in close and hold HK, B, F, F, release and press HK
Fatality 2 (Pound) – get in close, F, D, D, F, LP
Pit Fatality – D, F, D, F, LP
Friendship – F, F, D, F, HP
Babality – D, D, D, B, HK
Animality – get close, R, BL, BL, BL, BL



▲ If you ever stop to think what happened to the crappy late-eighties dance combo, *The London Boys*, here are the new routines.



▲ See! The Net is truly bad for your health.

Mr. Cyrax

– attacks ya knacks

Standard Moves

Net – B, B, LK
Bomb (close) – hold LK, B, B, HK
Bomb (far) – hold LK, F, F, HK
Teleport – F, D, BL
Air Throw – D, F, BL, LP
Crushing Combo – HP, HP, HK, HP, HK, BL+HK

Finishing Moves

Fatality 1 (Self Destruct) – get close, D, D, F, U+R
Fatality 2 (Heli-Slice) – full screen away, hold BL, D, D, U, D, HP
Pit Fatality – tap R+BL repeatedly
Friendship – R, R, R, U
Babality – F, F, B, HP
Animality – get close, hold BL, U, U, D, D

Mr. Nightwolf

– bad indian tough

Standard Moves

Arrow – D, DB, B, LP
Shield – B, B, B, HK
Shoulder Slam – F, F, LK
Axe Uppercut – D, DF, F, HP
Crushing Combo – LK, HP, HP, LP, HK

Finishing Moves

Fatality 1 (Skylight) – hold BL, U, U, release BL, B, F, BL
Fatality 2 (Lightning) – outside sweep range, hold HP, B, B, D, release and press HP
Pit Fatality – R, R, BL
Friendship – HP, R, R, R+D
Babality – F, B, F, B+LP
Animality – get close, hold BL, F, F, D, release and press BL



▲ “Look here boy, this is how to look like a pompus knob... good eh? Do ya want to feel me muscles?”



▲ “Don’t tell me, Larry Hagman need another kidney?”



Sindel

– not Cindelrella

Standard Moves

Scream – F, F, F, HP
Float – B, B, F, HK
Fireball (ground) – F, F, LP
Fireball (air) – D, DF, F, LK
Crushing Combo – HK, HP, HP, D+LP

Finishing Moves

Fatality 1 (Hair Tangle) – inside sweep range, R, R, BL, R, BL
Fatality 2 (Scream) – get in close, R, BL, BL, R+BL
Pit Fatality – D, D, D, LP
Friendship – R, R, R, R, R+U
Babality – R, R, R+U
Animality – one step away, hold BL, F, F, U, HP

Mr. Kano

– terminator wierdo

Standard Moves

Knife Throw – D, DB, B, HP
Knife Swipe – D, DF, F, HP
Choke Hold – D, DF, F, LP
Kannonball – hold LK for 3 secs
Air Throw – hold BL in air
Crushing Combo – HP, HP, HK, LK, BL+HK

Finishing Moves

Fatality 1 (Skeleton Grab) – get in close, hold LP, F, D, D, F, release and press LP
Fatality 2 (Eye Laser) – within sweep range, LP, BL, BL, HK
Pit Fatality – hold BL, U, U, B, LK
Friendship – LK, R, R, HK
Babality – F, F, D, D, LK
Animality – get in close, hold HP, BL, BL, BL, release and press HP



▲ Kano qualified from the Blanka school of annoyance with honours!

Mr. Sektor

– red predator rejector

Standard Moves

Teleport Punch – F, F, LK
Missile (homing) – F, D, B, HP
Missile (straight) – F, F, LP
Crushing Combo – HP, HP, HK, HK, BL+HK

Finishing Moves

Fatality 1 (Flamer) – F, F, F, B, BL
Fatality 2 (Crusher) – outside sweep range, hold LP, R, R, BL, release and press LP
Pit Fatality – R, R, R, D
Friendship – R, R, R, R, D
Babality – B, D, D, D, HK
Animality – get in close, F, F, D, U



▲ Obviously they have the lesser know *Street Fighter II* to emulate wherever Sektor came from before he was a Mortal Kombatant.



▲ Hot stuff! I guess he likes his friends char-grilled.



▲ Good job he's got targets, you wouldn't want to miss from there!

Sub-Zero

– he's our hero

Standard Moves

Ice Blast (straight) – D, DF, F, LP
Ice Rain (homing) – D, DF, F, HP
Ice Rain (near) – D, F, B, HP
Ice Rain (far) – D, B, F, HP
Ice Decoy – D, DB, B, LP
Slide – B, LP+BL+LK
Crushing Combo – HP, HP, LP, HK, B+HK

Finishing Moves

Fatality 1 (Freeze Breath) – inside sweep range, B, B, D, B, R
Fatality 2 (Ice Smash) – get in close, BL, BL, R, BL, R
Pit Fatality – B, D, F, F, HK
Friendship – LK, R, R, U
Babality – D, B, B, HK
Animality – get in close, hold BL+R, F, U, U



▲ Don't you just hate gamers that do this move all the time?



▲ Will the real Sub-Zero please step forward?

Mr. Smoke

– a fiery bloke

Should you ever find this elusive soul, these might come in handy.

Standard Moves

Spear – B, B, LP
Teleport Punch – F, F, LK
Air Throw – BL when in air
Invisibility – hold BL, U, U, R
Crushing Combo – HP, HP, LK, HK, LP

Finishing Moves

Fatality 1 (Oral Bomb) – outside sweep range, hold BL+R, D, D, F, U
Fatality 2 (Earth Xplode) – full screen away, hold BL, U, U, F, D
Pit Fatality – F, F, D, LK
Friendship – R, R, R, HK
Babality – D, D, B, B, HK
Animality – full screen away, D, F, F, BL

► You know what they always say, wherever there's Smoke there's...



Kabal

– not our pal

Standard Moves

Fireball – B, B, HP
Spin – B, F, LK
Saw Blade – B, B, B, R
Crushing Combo – LK, LK, HP, HP, D+HP

Finishing Moves

Fatality 1 (Scare) – one step away, R, BL, BL, BL, HK
Fatality 2 (Inflate) – D, D, B, F, BL
Pit Fatality – BL, BL, HK
Friendship – R, LK, R, R+U
Babality – R, R, LK
Animality – hold HP, F, F, D, release and press HP



▲ Never let success (or lack of it) go to your head. What a swelling!

Shang Tsung

– the end of the fun

Standard Moves

Fireball (one) – B, B, HP
Fireball (two) – B, B, F, HP
Fireball (three) – B, B, F, F, HP
Ground Fire – F, B, B, LK
Crushing Combo – LK, HP, HP, LP, B+HK

Morphs

Cyrax – BL, BL, BL
Jax – F, F, D, LP
Kabal – LP, BL, HK
Kano – B, F, BL
Kung Lao – R, R, BL, R
Liu Kang – 360° toward
Nightwolf – U, U, U
Sektor – D, F, B, R
Sheeva – F, D, F, LK
Sindel – B, D, B, LK
Sonya – D+R+LP+BL
Stryker – F, F, F, HK
Sub-Zero – F, D, F, HP
Smoke – B, B, D, LK

Finishing Moves

Fatality 1 (Spike Bed) – one step away, hold LP, D, F, F, D, release and press LP
Fatality 2 (Soul Suck) – get in close, hold LP, R, BL, R, BL, release and press LP
Pit Fatality – hold BL, U, U, B, LP
Friendship – LK, R, R, D
Babality – R, R, R, LK
Animality – inside sweep range, hold HP, R, R, R, release and press HP



▲ Another inch and he'd know exactly what giving birth is like!

Not bad eh? If this guide doesn't help you mash your mates into a bloody, squidgy pulp then consider taking up chess!

3DOPLAYSTATIONSATURNNEOGEOPCATARIULTRA64

Issue **3**
On sale
5th October

XGen

Why
Upgrade your
machine

If you don't

upgrade
your
magazine?

XGen

PLAYING A
PART IN
YOUR FUTURE



ou've all seen buyers' guides in mags before... boring aren't they? Only two types of people ever read them, new owners looking for sound advice (and it doesn't come any sounder than ours!), and folk interested to see how we've rated games which they've bought.

Our buyers' guide is different though. We boldly go where no guide has gone before and tackle the problem of games becoming dated. A game may be excellent now, but in a few months time it could have been pummelled into submission by something even better, so to address this problem, we've introduced a new category that marks the games in accordance to what is currently around, and if it is bettered, the marks will gradually deplete.

Of course, this being the first issue, the marks are largely the same for both categories, but you'll see what we mean as time progresses. Simple non?

Game	Review Score	Comment	Date of Review	Current Score
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Beat 'em-ups

1. Tekken	95%	Simply the best	Nov '95	95%
2. MK3	93%	Bloody unbeatable stuff gore fans	Nov '95	93%
3. Street Fighter: The Movie	85%	More steroids needed	Nov '95	85%
4. Battle Arena Toshinden	76%	Great looking stuff for beginners	Nov '95	76%
5. WWF Wrestlemania	74%	Competent, if unspectacular staged boredom	Nov '95	74%
6. Zero Divide	68%	Too heavy to handle	Nov '95	68%

Combat Flight Sims

1. Ace Combat	79%	Playable yes, fun um	Nov '95	79%
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Shooters

1. Loaded	85%	big, bad blasting action	Nov '95	85%
2. Rapid Reload	71%	Could use a rapid rethink	Nov '95	71%
3. The Raiden Project	68%	A perfect arcade conversion, shame really	Nov '95	68%
4. Kileak The Blood	57%	A weak corridor game	Nov '95	57%
5. Cybersled	55%	Best left in the arcades	Nov '95	55%
6. Zeitgeist	51%	Incredibly slow and highly repetitive	Nov '95	51%
7. Novastorm	38%	A definite disappointment	Nov '95	38%

Sports Sims

1. NBA Jam: TE	90%	Sorted speedy sporty sim	Nov '95	90%
2. Striker '96	89%	Can you kick it? Yes you can	Nov '95	89%
3. Boxer's Road	82%	Great boxing action - eventually	Nov '95	82%
4. J-League Winning Eleven	73%	Arcade soccer made difficult	Nov '95	73%
5. Ground Stroke Tennis	65%	Good looks, little substance	Nov '95	65%

Strategy games

1. Theme Park	86%	More fun than Thorpe Park	Nov '95	86%
2. 3D Lemmings	69%	Nice idea, but not for me	Nov '95	69%

Adventure games

1. Discworld	74%	Just don't mention the monkey	Nov '95	74%
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Racers

1. Wipeout	94%	Simply, better than Ridge Racer	Nov '95	94%
2. Ridge Racer	93%	Go on then, buy it	Nov '95	93%
3. Destruction Derby	86%	A great way to get wrecked	Nov '95	86%
4. Motor Toon GP	69%	Wild, wacky, but limited	Summer '95	61%

Platform

1= Rayman	87%	Fiendishly difficult, but fun	Nov '95	87%
1= Jumping Flash	87%	Grippingly addictive & surprisingly challenging	Nov '95	87%



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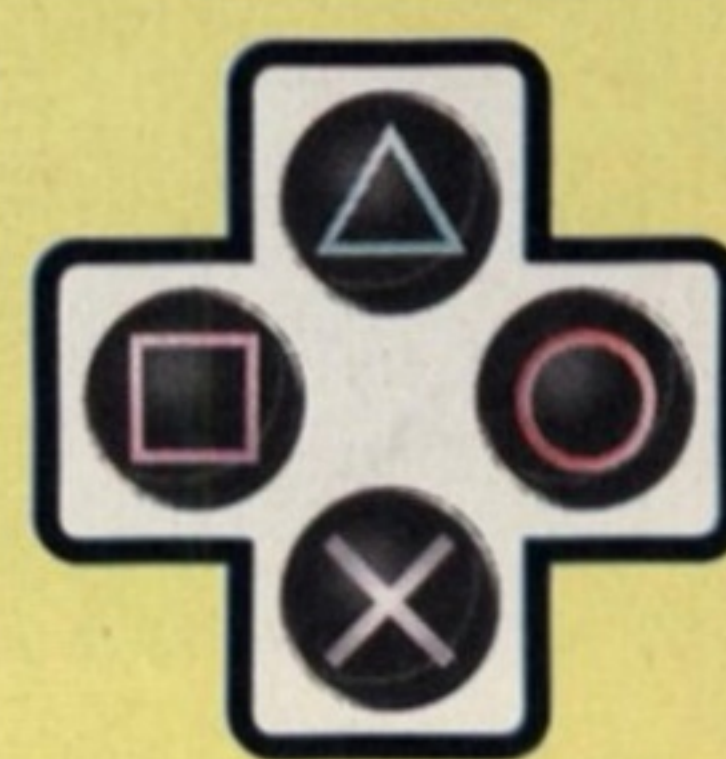
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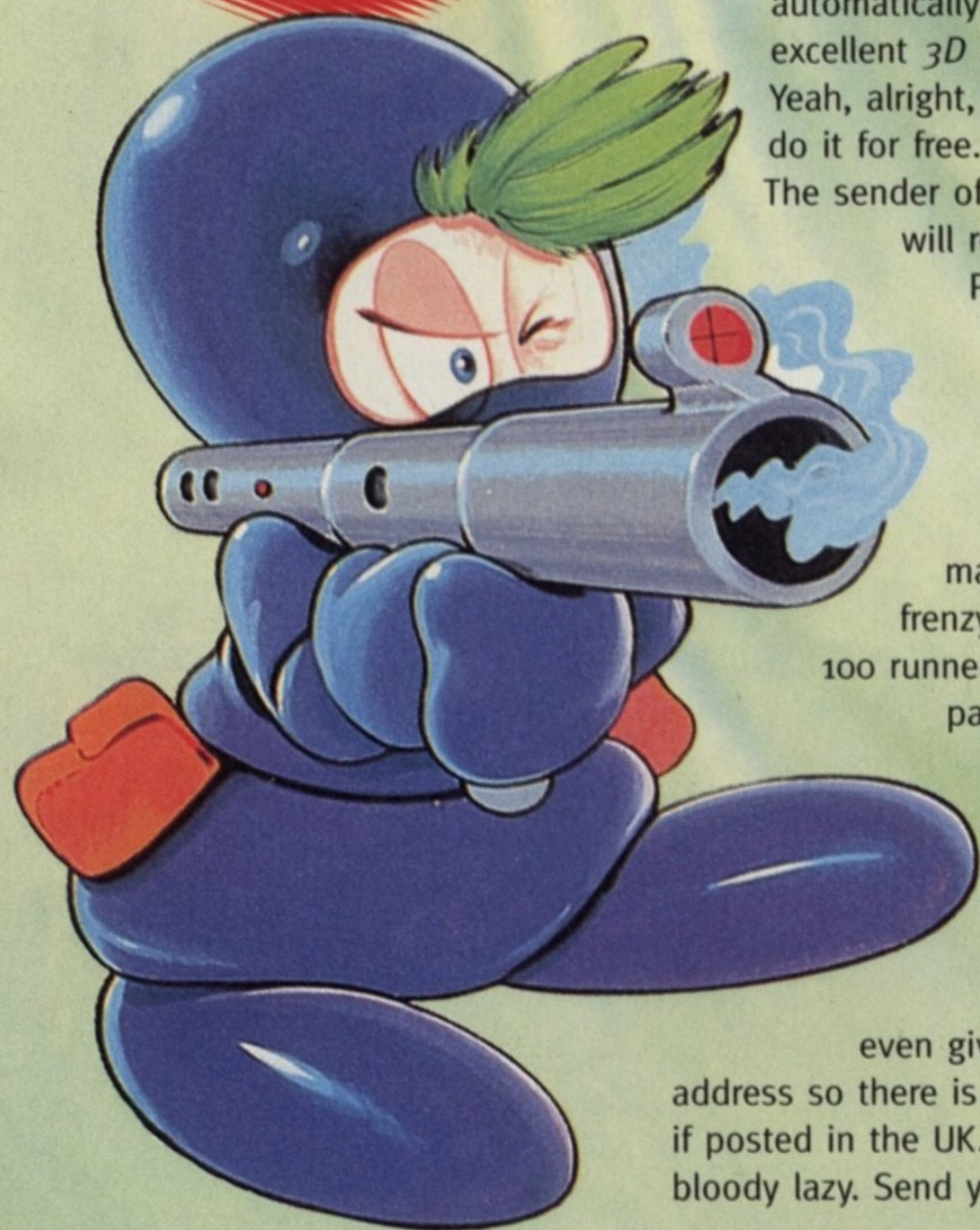


Readers' Survey

Sponsored by Sony Interactive



Win a
Brand New
PlayStation!



Okay, so you've read the magazine, now you must have an opinion or two about how we could make it even better. I bet you could tell us something about the other PlayStation magazines you have read too.

Why not take five minutes and fill in the *Play* readers' survey, and not only get to say what you think of us, but get automatically entered into our excellent *3D Lemmings* competition! Yeah, alright, we knew you wouldn't do it for free.

The sender of the winning survey will receive a brand new PlayStation, a copy of *3D Lemmings*, and a Jelly Belly jelly bean dispenser full of the scrummiest confectionaries on the market. Major sugar frenzy ahoy!

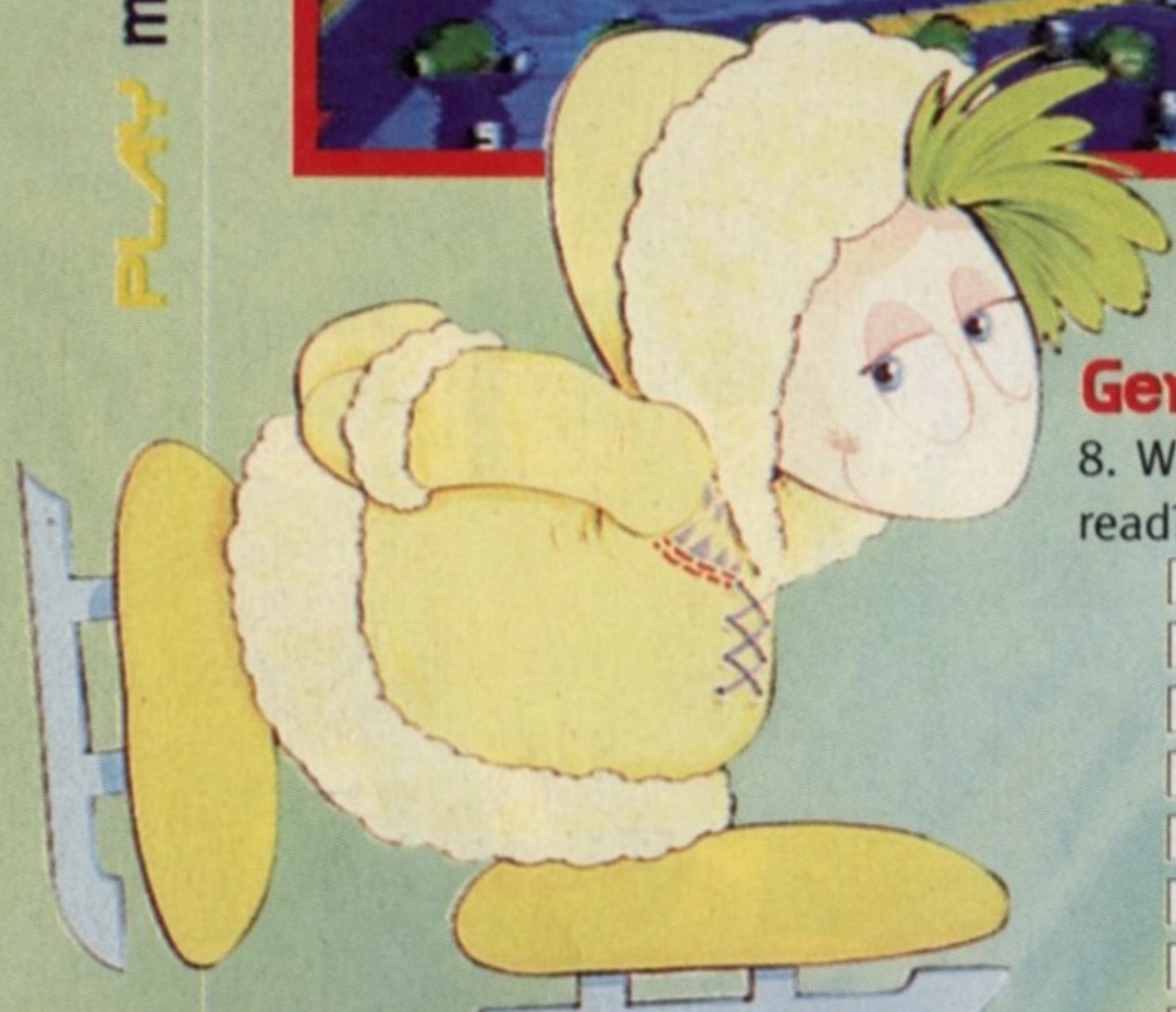
100 runners up will also receive packets of Jelly Belly jelly beans in the post. Sweet reward I'd say.

Still not sure whether to fill it in or not? Well we've even given you a freepost address so there is no need for a stamp if posted in the UK. Now don't be so bloody lazy. Send your completed surveys

to the following address: *Play Readers' Survey, Paragon Publishing Ltd. Freepost (BH 1255), Bournemouth BH1 1BR.*

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1. Your name
.....
2. Your address
.....
.....
3. Are you male? ☐ female? ☐
4. How old are you?
☐ Under 10
☐ 10-16
☐ 17-21
☐ 22-26
☐ 27-31
☐ 32-40
☐ Over 40
5. What is your occupation?
.....
6. If you are a student, what are you studying?
.....
7. How much does your household earn a year?
☐ 5-10K
☐ 10-15K
☐ 15-20K
☐ 20-30K
☐ 30K+



General Information

8. What daily newspapers do you read?

- ☐ The Sun
- ☐ The Daily Star
- ☐ The Guardian
- ☐ The Times
- ☐ The Telegraph
- ☐ The Independent
- ☐ The Express
- ☐ The Daily Mail
- ☐ Today
- ☐ The Mirror
- ☐ Others (please state)

9. What Sunday newspapers do you read?

- ☐ The Observer
- ☐ The Sunday Times
- ☐ The Sunday Express
- ☐ The Independent on Sunday
- ☐ The Sunday Mail
- ☐ News of the World
- ☐ Others (please state)

10. What PlayStation magazines do you read, other than Play? Do you feel any of them are better than Play?

Read
Better

- ☐ The Official PlayStation Magazine
- ☐ PlayStation Plus
- ☐ Sony Pro

Also

- ☐ GamesMaster
- ☐ Edge
- ☐ X•Gen
- ☐ CVG
- ☐ Games World
- ☐ Others (please state)

11. What other non games magazines do you read?

- ☐ Empire
- ☐ Premiere
- ☐ Sky
- ☐ GQ
- ☐ Loaded
- ☐ Q
- ☐ Select
- ☐ NME
- ☐ Melody Maker
- ☐ Top Gear
- ☐ Others (please state)

12. Which of the following do you own?

- ☐ Credit card
- ☐ Personal pension
- ☐ Mortgage
- ☐ Loan
- ☐ Health insurance
- ☐ House insurance
- ☐ Life insurance

13. Do you intend to buy any of the following in the next 12 months?

- ☐ Television
- ☐ Cable
- ☐ Video
- ☐ Satellite TV
- ☐ Car
- ☐ Hi-Fi

Your PlayStation

14. Do you own PlayStation?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

14b. If no, are you planning to buy one?

15. Where did you buy your PlayStation?

- ☐ Mail order
- ☐ Retail outlet
- ☐ Specialist supplier
- ☐ Other (please state)

16. Where do you buy your software?

17. Do you use your PlayStation to play music CDs?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

18. What peripherals are you hoping to buy in the next 6 months?

19. Would you prefer to pay £2.95 for a magazine without a demo CD?
Or £5.95 for a magazine with a demo CD?

20. Generally, how do you think we could improve the magazine?

21. Is there any other section you would like to see in the magazine?

22. What games are you looking forward to being released?

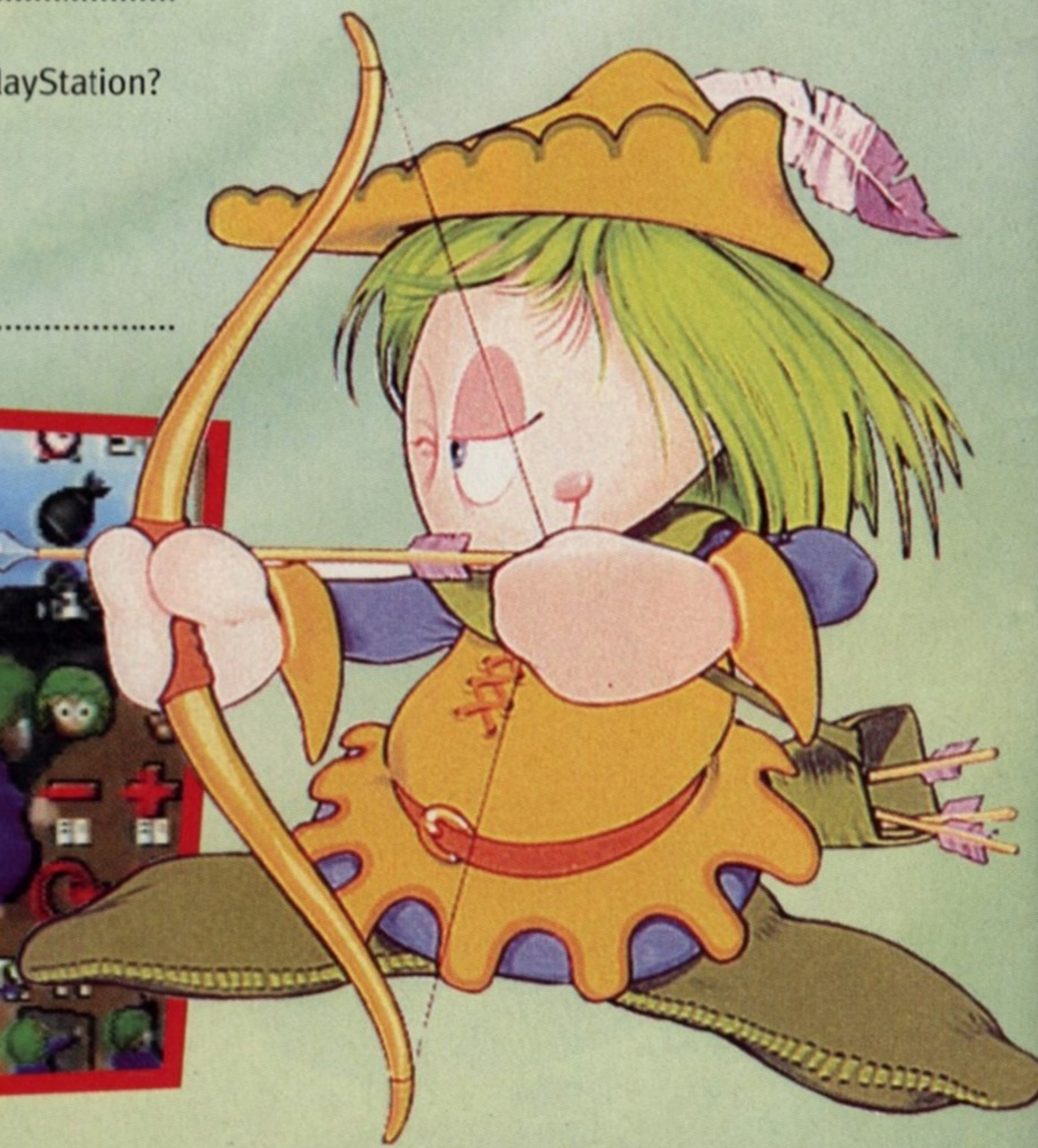
23. What is your favourite type of game?

- ☐ Beat-'em-up
- ☐ Shoot-'em-up
- ☐ Racer
- ☐ Sports
- ☐ Role playing game
- ☐ Adventure
- ☐ Combat flight sim
- ☐ Puzzle

24. Do you believe you got value for money from this issue of Play?

Finally, a tie break question from Sony themselves:

25. Who do you think is the world's biggest Lemming?



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next issue

PLAY magazine November 1995

Played Out...

W

ell, we hope you enjoyed it. And filled in the survey to tell us so. (Hey, and if you want to fill in a subscription form too, that would be smart).

A thought to leave you with: If you haven't bought a PlayStation yet, why not? It's better than Saturn, it's better than 3DO, it's better than Jaguar – it's even better than a PC. *Play* reckons that to run some of the PlayStation games we've seen on a PC, you'd have to fork out for at least £2,000 worth of top of the range PC kit. Sony's grey bundle of fun costs around £300. No contest really!

And with a PC you have to make sure you've got enough RAM, configure system files, check for viruses...and so on and so on. Who wants that? With a PlayStation you simply put the CD in, click the lid down, and hit the power button – now that's what I call plug in and play.

If that's not convinced you, buy *Play* next month and you'll be taking home issue two of the most powerful games magazine on Earth PLUS an exclusive playable PlayStation demo CD!

There are more top reviews too. Targeted for evaluation next time around are *FIFA '96*, *Primal Rage*, *Actua Golf*, *Road Rash*, *Wing*

Commander III, *Alone In The Dark: Jack's Back*, and many, many more. Well over 20 games, we reckon. Could even be more!

What a machine! What a team! What a great magazine!

Issue 2 of *Play* goes on sale November 16th, priced £2.95 (without CD) and £5.95 (with CD).



Better
than a
PC!

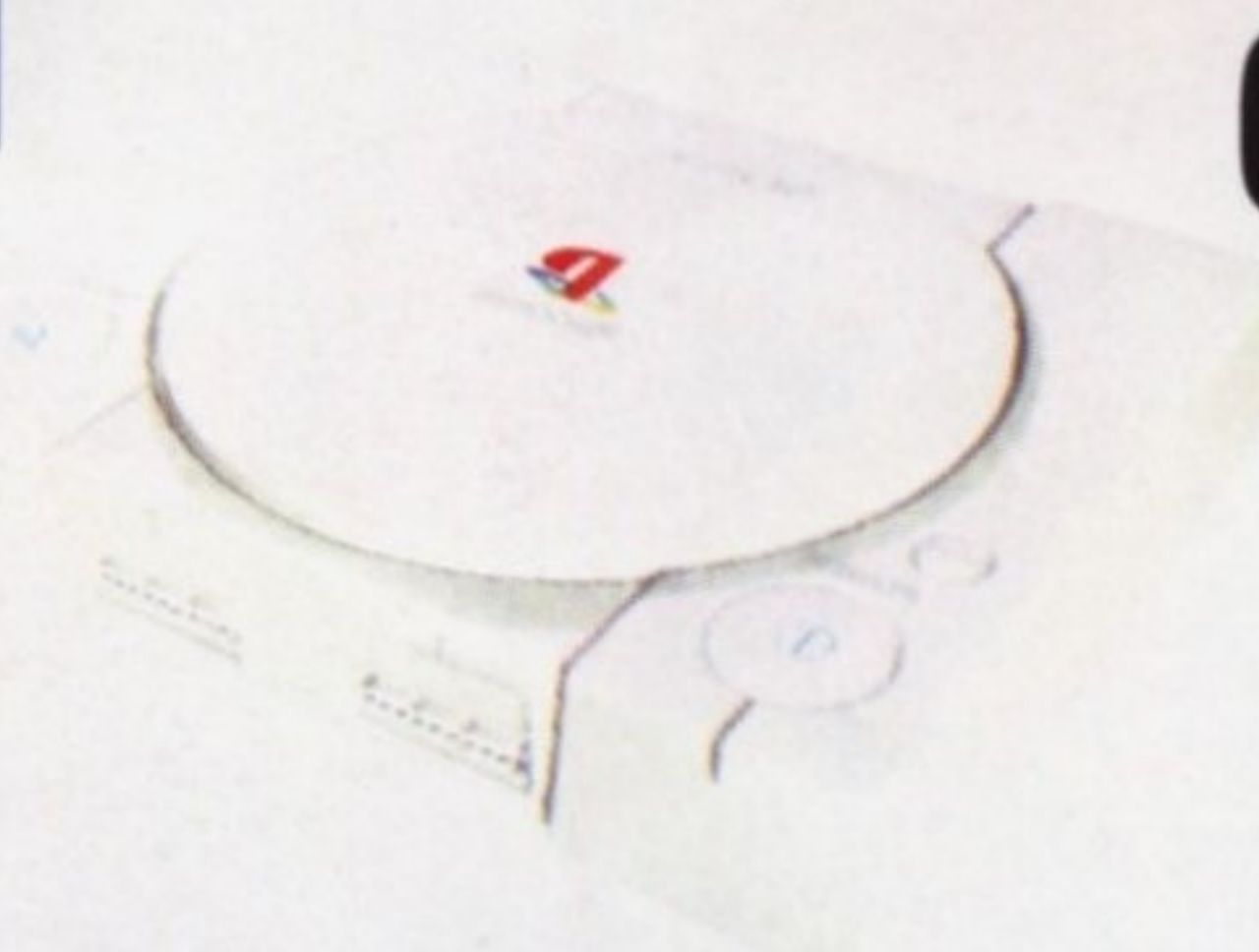


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*First weekend sales figures:

Saturn	5,000
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spot^{the}
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PLAY 